TREATISE ON ETHICS (1684)

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TREATISE ON ETHICS
(1684)

by

Nicolas Malebranche

Translation with Introduction by

Craig Walton

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Translator's Note

Malebranche's *Traité de morale* was first published in 1684 in Rotterdam by Reinier Leers. This translation is based on the critical edition edited by Michel Adam, Tome XI of the *Oeuvres complètes de Malebranche* (Direction: André Robinet) [Paris: Librairie J. Vrin, 1966]. Malebranche's own notes have all been included, with the notation, "[M.]" (usually at the end of the note). Prof. Adam's notes are included when supplying detail on Malebranche's sources and those quotations he could track down. I have also included a few notes of my own, chiefly to facilitate comparing passages on the same subject. Those variant readings which indicate substantive changes due either to controversy or reflection, are included parenthetically and so noted, or, when longer, included as footnotes. Translations from the *Bible* are here translated from the French where M. had already made his own translation from the Latin Vulgate, or, when he had cited the Latin, I use the *Jerusalem Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1971). As often happens in translation from French to English, *esprit* is given as 'mind', or as 'spirit', depending on the context and the philosophical sense of the discussion. Usually I have rendered *actuel* as 'temporary' or 'current', also depending on the philosophical sense. More often than not I have left now-arcane usages in place, such as 'animal spirits', or 'movements' (instead of 'motives'). My own occasional clarifying insertions are set off by [square brackets] in the text.

Although I examined the UCLA William Andrews Clark Memorial Library's copy of James Shipton's 1694 (London) translation of this work, only the *édition critique* of Michel Adam has been relied upon. I want to extend a particular expression of gratitude to Prof. André Robinet of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, whose help in making an early copy of Adam's edition available at the time of its publication first set me off on the course here completed.

Finally, I want to thank Richard A. Watson for his careful reading and editing contribution, to Tom Lennon for his comment and encouragement over the years, and to Richard H. Popkin for keeping my spirits up during the long effort to accomplish this undertaking. Their high standards are emulated internationally, and in some way have moved what is well-made herein; the errors which remain are my own.

C.W.

CRAIG WALTON

Translator's Introduction

In this introduction I will undertake six related topics, in order: Malebranche's impact on his own time; his theory of being; his theories of causation and knowledge; Part One of his *Ethics*, on virtue; Part Two, on duty; the influence of his *Ethics* on some later philosophers; and a final section of appreciation and assessment of his significance.

I. MALEBRANCHE'S IMPACT ON HIS OWN TIME

In his own time, Nicolas Malebranche was one of the most widely-read and influential philosophers in Europe. From the time of his first, and most well-known work, the 1674–76 *Search after Truth* until his final *Reflections on physical premotion* just before he died in 1715, he took part for over forty years in most of the intellectual ferment of what Whitehead later called "the century of genius". He stands among the small number of philosophers who have undertaken to construct a philosophical system, from ontology to logic and theory of knowledge, natural science including kinetics and biology, theological studies, moral psychology and ethics (including political and social duties), and one of the earliest studies in comparative Christian and Chinese philosophy and theology. In the course of this systematic philosophical undertaking he endeavored to heal and reconcile the growing breach between the mathematically and mechanically oriented 'new sciences' and the moral and spiritual insight of Thomistic and, most particularly Augustinian Christianity; he corresponded with Leibniz concerning controversies in mathematics, the explanation of kinetic force, and the raging controversies over scholastic Aristotelian metaphysics, and he worked on the new Leibniz-Newton calculus in the early 1690's.[1] He undertook experiments on the formation of the fetus from fertilization to birth, by keeping large numbers of fertile chicken eggs, opening and drawing and describing one per day for the full cycle of their maturation; as a member of the highly-selective Christian 'institute for advanced studies' maintained by the Oratory in Paris, he was one of the first scholars appointed to the newly-chartered Royal Academy of Sciences in 1699[2]; he tangled with Antoine Arnauld concerning the formation of ideas and the problem of how to verify or falsify them; he had seven of his works placed on the Index of banned books during his lifetime and replied by writing a defense of what he called "the spirit of free inquiry"[3]; his first book provoked John Locke to write a critical "examination" which was eventually published after Locke's death,[4] and later inspired Bishop Berkeley, as a college student, to paraphrase and

ponder his ideas in the youthful *Commonplace Books* of 1715. His work touched the controversy-loving philosopher and encyclopaedist Pierre Bayle, who reviewed his books, spreading his ideas across Europe through the "News from the Republic of Letters". Even before his death a group of younger, like-minded scholars grew up around him, who came to be known as "Malebranchistes" and themselves became members of the Oratory or the Academy, or in other ways contributed to education, church reform, moral philosophy, physics, and mathematics.[5]

Although his more mature years saw increasing European interest in the experimental sciences in general, and particularly in founding an experimental science of ethics, his work in moral philosophy has been the least studied.[6] In the late 1950's the French National Center for Scientific Research ["CNRS"] chose his work as their first project in developing new and high philological standards for critical editions of the greatest French philosophers. Under the general direction of André Robinet, the CNRS completed its work in 1967, producing a twenty-two volume set ranging from correspondence and book reviews of his work to critical editions of each philosophical work between 1674 and 1715. Thanks to this monumental edition, English-speaking philosophers were able to begin translating the major works using these critical texts; the present volume is the fourth to appear since completion of that project.[7]

Nicolas Malebranche's life virtually parallels that of "The Sun King", Louis XIV, for he was born a month before his eventual earthly sovereign, and died one month after Louis. He was born in Paris on August 5, 1638, the tenth child of a highly-placed government administrator who had married well. He came into the world with a severe curvature of the spine and frail lungs. Fortunately his parents were able to hire a tutor during his school years, since he was often too weak to go, or stay at school. Yet despite seventy-seven years of lung, spinal, and stomach troubles, his mind and spirit were vigorous and curious from the start until the end of a remarkably fruitful life. His parents died when he was 18, and his older brother cared for him, introducing him to the Oratory in Paris – a religious order founded by Cardinal Bérulle to emphasize the love of God, simple piety, and the celebration of God's creation through study and teaching. It was there, on the rue Sainte-Honoré among some of the intellectual and spiritual leaders of the French Counter-Reformation, that Malebranche's education formed the foundations for his later work. He studied the ancient Greeks, the beginnings of Biblical scholarship, the fathers of the Church, especially St. Augustine, some of the Jansenist reform ideas, the already-controversial philosophy of René Descartes, and the mathematics and physics of the period. Two years after he entered the Oratory, i.e., in 1662, he was browsing in the book stalls still to be found near the Oratory along the banks of the Seine, when he bought a copy of Descartes's *Treatise on Man*, explaining the human body as a machine operated by springs, cables, levers and pressures – with drawings made by Descartes himself. The question as to just how accurate is a mechanical explanation of the human body, and how such

explanation might be understood in relationship to our mental, moral, and spiritual life, leapt to his attention and was to occupy it from that day until his death.

II. MALEBRANCHE'S THEORY OF BEING

His first work, *The Search After Truth*, appeared from 1674–76, some fourteen to sixteen years after his dramatic encounter with Descartes' work; to this day it is the only work unfailingly associated with his name, though it was the first of nine studies and several volumes of responses in which he went on to explore and develop his thought. Malebranche criticizes the prevailing theories of sense perception, imagination, memory and cognition, and first proposes his own theory of how we acquire and evaluate ideas – from mathematical to physical, and moral to self-reflective. Underlying this theory is his rejection of Scholastic Aristotelian metaphysics, in which particular beings are said to have powers or forms that act on our minds to inform us. Malebranche – here in company with other critics of that metaphysics from Montaigne to Bacon and Hobbes – argues that the prevailing view of beings endowed with powers by which they act unilaterally, as "causes" in the full sense of that word, makes no sense and cannot be confirmed by experience. For Malebranche, on the other hand, power can be predicated univocally only of God. Created beings have only that limited power given by God under the conditions of creation. In his 1680 *Treatise on Nature and Grace*, he extended this analysis further to the idea that all created beings, whether extended spatially or active intelligently or both, are enabled to do what they do, in the ways that they do them, only by general laws characterizing God's ways of organizing creation.

This system Malebranche called God's "immutable Order", which provides for both physical motion, and spiritual or moral and mental change as well. Presented in its most detailed version in the 1688 *Dialogues on metaphysics*,[8] its fundamental features are two: first, "Order" integrates power with reason by way of love in an overall unity which is the Justice or Wisdom of God. Malebranche is undertaking to write for reasoning people everywhere, to whom the principles of power, reason, and love are familiar. To him, he explains, these are the philosophical meanings of the three persons of the Christian Holy Trinity – God the Father as Power, God the Son as Reason, and God the Holy Spirit as Love. The non-Christian reader would perhaps find this usage awkward – and I remark shortly that other theological terms are introduced with technical meanings later. But in each case he explains how a term having significance to the Christian faithful can be understood by others in its equivalent, strictly-philosophical usage. This he does here in arguing the systematic unity of power or energy with reason or intelligibility, by way of love. It is because God not only is, but also acts and knows, and does so integrally in the most fruitful way, that what He is and how He is are integrated in "immutable Order".

The second fundamental feature of this immutable Order is that all the things that are, in whatever ways that they are, are so-constituted by a complex combinatory system of two kinds of relationships, those of quantity and those of quality or perfection. The former set of relations provides for the intelligibility of things that admit of mensuration and cannot be other than they are; for those reasons, these relationships constitute necessary truths. The latter set of relations accounts for differences of kind, and of change within kinds or qualities of beings, changes through internal action such as growth or decay, and through interaction among beings, such as benefiting or harming. These are conditions of being that may or may not occur under this or that set of circumstances – they are contingencies, and for those reasons, these relationships constitute "practical truths", truths of action (I remark on more of this aspect later).

Because of these two sorts of truths which, taken together, account for the quantitative and qualitative conditions of all created beings, it follows that our ideas of them can be of either kind – the first, which capture necessary truths, are "clear and distinct" or, if not, are misconceived and can be corrected by entirely mental clarification. Here Malebranche is using the same phrase Descartes used for all true ideas whatsoever. But for Malebranche, the other sort of ideas, those we have of contingent conditions of quality or perfection, are, because of their subject-matter, usually felt as confused or vague, needing empirical investigation in order to be made as clear as experience allows. These two kinds of intelligibility therefore emphasize not only the orderliness of God's creation, but its continuing, dynamic character – growth, decay, improvement, and debasement continue to occur, such that if we are to have competent understanding of them we must undertake experimental investigation of which factors affect a being or a process, and how they do it. That sort of investigation is not necessarily true *a priori*, but is contingently true *a posteriori*. The foundations of both sorts are established within "Order".

In consequence of this, as investigators we must distinguish which relationships pertain to which of our inquiries, and how. In a complex investigation, some of the subject-matter may be as it is necessarily, and another aspect of the same subject matter be as it is contingently. A simple example is that the force I exert on a tackling dummy in football practice is calculated by my mass times my velocity, the formula for which does not change and the answer to which is necessarily true given those relationships; but meanwhile, the skill with which I am able to tackle a moving ball-carrier can be acquired, has to do with talent and practice, and thus the truth of a statement about my quality as a lineman in football is contingent and comprised of variables both determined, and changeable, experimentally. Malebranche's stated intention is that his theory of being can provide the framework and principles of intelligibility, the appropriately rich theoretical constructs of analysis, to serve as a basis for both the new and classic mathematical sciences, as well as the new experimental natural and moral sciences.

III. MALEBRANCHE'S THEORIES OF CAUSALITY AND OF KNOWLEDGE

The two concepts most widely associated with Malebranche's work are his proposal that, intellectually, "we see all things in God", and that no created being is in fact a cause unto him- or herself, alone, but that we are, instead, created beings whose internal and interdependent activities make us "occasional" causes – beings who "determine" or give space-time concretion to God's necessary and practical truths. Some discussion of these suggestions is needed before I turn to Malebranche's moral theory, since they underpin much of his investigation into both our physiological condition (our "passions"), and our moral character-development and assessment of duties.

Malebranche was, in his own day, one of the most articulate proponents of "illuminism", the notion somewhat inspired by Plato but emphasized most centrally and eloquently by St. Augustine.[9] This view has two aspects, a negative and a positive: the negative is that these thinkers see no physical process or empirical learning experience that can account for the fact that we acquire and use ideas of things. I may need to see one, two, or three cats before I "get the idea" of 'cat', and some people will need more examples, some fewer. But once I have that idea, I am able to identify or play with cats whose size, color, or breed is significantly other than the ones from which I "got the idea". Illuminists argue that there is no gradation by which this or that sensory experience or, indeed, even a long string of such experiences, could, by itself or themselves, build up in the mind to become a general idea. The most such a purely-experiential process could produce would be a complicated idea compounded out of all the cats I have seen – which is still a limited number, such as 588 cats, all of whom I must try to remember if I am to keep together the vital details I need to make this composite one idea of 'cat'. St. Augustine argued that this route of explanation will not work – there simply is no getting to the goal from that point of departure.

Turning to the positive aspect of this approach to general ideas, St. Augustine borrows a bit from Plato, who proposed a sort of "anamnesis" or "un-forgetting" to explain what happens: for Plato, it is as if I had seen the idea of 'cat' in the intelligible world of archetypes, then was incarnated, and due to the continual and increasing input of sensory stimulations my mind receives every hour, I have forgotten what I "once" knew, but while seeing this or that cat begin to remember, until, "all at once", as it were, it all "comes back to me" and I "have" or "see" the idea of 'cat'. According to St. Augustine, this internal seeing, with the eye of the mind, occurs because God is in fact the light that enlightens all that there is that comes into the world, and works not only by way of physical light from the sun, but more importantly by the light of the mind that He provides to our powers of understanding to enable us to see not just the particular physical examples of this or that cat here or there, but, more deeply, what it is for a cat to be a cat, 'the idea of a cat', intelligibly.

Malebranche adapts the Platonic-Augustinian theory to some of the lessons he learned from Descartes' emphasis on the "method" of rightly conducting our

mind's powers of inquiry, but also from the later renaissance and early modern skeptical doubts raised against the then-prevailing theory of knowledge, the Scholastic-Aristotelian – in which this issue is resolved through gradations of abstraction.

To explain briefly, Aristotle in his *De anima* and again in Book Alpha of his *Metaphysics* set forth a gradual process of experience, by which we begin with this one sense-experience, such as seeing this cat, then add to it a sense-experience of another cat, such as touching it, then compound these two sense-experiences in our "common" sense, the place where we mix and unify various sensory inputs into one composite image; we then store some of these images in memory and, if they contain or exhibit to our minds some kind of a pattern – as where all of our cat memories share a few traits in common – we then move to the level of 'experience' of cats. From that, if we have reason to work with them, breed them, or play with them, we would build on and add to these patterns by acquiring skills about cat handling, training, and so forth. Finally, the highest level of all, based on patterns and practical skills but reaching farther and abstracted from them, would be to investigate into the principles and causes of what it is for a cat to be what it is – the substance of 'cat' with all of its potentiality, its actual condition, its purpose, the variety of its appearances, and so forth, which taken together would constitute knowledge of cats. As the reader may notice, this account is a more detailed version of just the sort of account Plato and St. Augustine found to be implausible – in effect, their position is that no number of degrees of mutation from sensory details upward through memory and pattern, etc., can ever get us to an intellectual insight or general idea.[10]

The Aristotelian account had already come under fire from Peter Ramus, Michel de Montaigne, Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, and Baruch de Spinoza before Malebranche came into the picture, so he was familiar with their doubts, and shared them. The principal doubt raised was that if beings were known according to the process of abstraction outlined above, then it ought to follow that given any actual being, it would come to be known by everyone in the same way – it would be known by one and all, and they would agree as to what it is for it to be what it is, because it had acted on, or interacted with, their minds so as to lead to that (common) knowledge. But this is not the case – not only between cultures, but within a culture, and even within the mind of the same person, a being is understood differently at different times, if not also in different places, even though it is the same being. And it may change beyond our expectations. It would seem, then, that there must be something more to the problem of knowledge than the being under inspection making itself known to investigators due to or by way of its substance and powers or qualities. This discussion is the context in which first Ramus and then Montaigne, and eventually most philosophers of the seventeenth century including Malebranche, and later also John Locke and then David Hume came to reject what they called "necessary connexion" in favor of some alternative account of causality.

Descartes had still held, albeit equivocally, to some idea that the thing I am trying to understand is the cause of my understanding – as when he argued by *reductio ad absurdum* that something must have caused my idea of God, but I am imperfect and so could have caused only an idea of an imperfect God, but I have an idea of a perfect God, and the only being that could have caused such an idea would be a perfect being, thus, a perfect being exists, which we call 'God'. (I say 'albeit equivocally' because it was Descartes who first tried out the notion that, rather than a being "causing" my idea of it, perhaps it "gives occasion to" my idea of it).

Malebranche's "occasionalism", then, began to emerge in its first version in this setting – the reasons for rejecting scholastic Aristotelianism and for leaning instead toward the illuminism of St Augustine. And, as I have shown, part of his rejection of the prevailing account is shared by a wide variety of other philosophers before and after, who also rejected the underlying causal notions needed to support the abstraction account of how we come by general ideas. I have also shown that Malebranche rejects the prevailing notion of causality for another reason – shared by Hobbes in a different way – namely, that analysis does not in fact show us any single case of any finite, created being having causal power in and of itself. Causality for Hobbes requires a multi-variant analysis, using as many factors or beings as the case reveals, such that only the resultant outcome as a whole can be called 'the' cause. Malebranche takes a somewhat different tack, but not unlike Hobbes's: he argues that created beings co-exist within a complex network of quantitative and qualitative relationships, such that any given event in a particular time and place "occasions" a range of general laws as-instantiated at this time and place among this or these beings. None, for Malebranche, could be said truly to be 'acting', since that verb pertains univocally only to God. But they are interacting contingently and relative to each other and to necessary and contingent truths, which collectively structure what happens, why, and how. And these, after the fact, are then intelligible in principle so that we can study the event or deed and come to understand it, whether among people or within ourselves. His choice of the word 'occasion' underlines the timeliness of it all – we are moving physically or, at least spiritually, so long as we are alive, and our moving is not only through physical spaces, but also through time, so that our own stories, and the stories of all the things that there are, are occasional in every encounter, in principle.

The other aspect of the causality controversy that comes to play in understanding occasionalism is that, for Malebranche, there is not only no way I could have the unilateral power to act irrespective of what or whoever might be within or around me, but, *a fortiori*, there is therefore no way I could make a true understanding come to me, or be made accessible to me. I have no unilateral power to do that kind of thing. Instead, therefore, Malebranche proposes that the ideas or archetypes in God's mind are presented by God to us in direct proportion to the focusing of our power of attention. We learn to pay attention, to concentrate, and insofar as we are able to set sensory, imaginative,

or passional input to one side and attend to the glimmerings of intelligibility they have presented, that attention is the "occasional cause" of the appropriate idea enlightening our minds so that we see what it is "in God" and, thence, of course, what and how it is in God's creation as well. This modified Christian Platonism is abbreviated by the phrase, 'seeing all things in God'. One must add, however, that for most of the kinds and ways of being we would want to understand, the act of attention that occasions insight is not undertaken without reference to empirical study, but, rather, is contingent on attention to all the "occasional causes" taking part in that event or process.[11]

IV. PART ONE OF MALEBRANCHE'S *ETHICS*, ON VIRTUE

Written in the summer and fall of 1683 and published by early 1684, Malebranche's *Treatise on Ethics*[12] can be seen as a uniquely conceived philosophical proposal, for in it he undertakes to integrate the study of moral character and moral excellence or virtue, as founded by Aristotle, with the study of obligation or duty we now associate with the later work of Immanuel Kant. In what follows, I outline Malebranche's argument concerning the cultivation of moral virtue and character first, and then consider his treatment of our duties to God, each other (including duties of political obedience and the right to rebel), and ourselves.

The truths of God's Order are of quantity or of quality and perfection. Because we are able to see both necessary and practical truths, it follows that both the magnitude or commensurable qualities and also the qualitative merits or defects of an action are real, and can be understood. That is, any given characteristic of any being or action either is, and is related, in this or that way, or it is not, and is not related or is dis-ordered; thus all of our judgments, of both kinds, are based on the relations constituted within God's Order. Using the moral sciences, therefore, we are, in principle, as able to compare and distinguish the wise or foolish, the just or unjust, as we are using the natural sciences to distinguish the slow from the fast or the small from the large.

Broadly, we are capable of three things – knowing, loving, and feeling; but of those three, two are up to us and one comes naturally, with no prompting or skill from us. That is, it is up to us to know the good of this or that object, and to love it according to its own perfection in God's Order; it is loved by God in a particular way, no more and no less, and Order is our guide in our own acts of loving. But it is not up to us to enjoy a loved being – we simply do enjoy loving things. Pleasure and pain are attached to our experiences of loving, whether done knowledgeably or not; we cannot be such a being as not to enjoy pleasure or dislike pain.

These are the foundations for the study of virtue, for all virtues depend on one, underlying virtue – namely, our love for God's Order and for guiding our lives by it.

It is not a virtue to do the right thing for the wrong reasons. Because we are

so familiar with 'to love' and all its tenses, adverbs, and adjectives, we do not question ourselves as to what the verb means. Duty and Virtue should not be confused – one can do one's duty without virtue because he feels like doing it at the moment or because he has no disposition not to. There are customs, like duelling or trial by ordeal, Malebranche notes, for which no one knows the origins or reasons – they are done because they are being done, a sort of 'law of beasts' rather than reasoning. Often force makes us do what we do. Yet we call the acts proceeding from these attitudes 'virtue'.

However, one might counter that reason is not a good guide, either, because it is corrupted and therefore cannot be trusted. By the time of his writing this work, the skeptical crisis of the later renaissance and early modern periods was in full swing, ranging from the first doubts about our intuitive reasoning powers expressed by Ramus and Montaigne, to more systematic exploration of our several fallibilities by Francis Bacon ("the Idols of the Mind") and René Descartes (especially in the *Discourse on Method* of 1637 and the *Meditations* of 1640–44).[13] Malebranche is far from a rationalist – in fact, not only does he extend the theme of the unreliability of our senses, imagination and passions, but also he goes Descartes one better, so to speak, in doubting Descartes's claim that we could have a clear and distinct *a priori* idea of our own being (the famous 'cogito' experience). For Malebranche our idea of what we are is experimental, not intuitive; it is contingent, not necessary; it is acquired through reflection over time, not through intense introspection driven by the "malin génie" hypothesis, as with Descartes.

But the *Treatise on Ethics* was not written to depend on argument developed in earlier works, such as the *Search after Truth*. Therefore he addresses this question directly: why should we turn to reason, when both the Bible and common experience teach us that our reasoning powers are flawed and unreliable? Why should we not simply turn to religion, to our faith in God, or to the guidance of the church, and leave reason to try to mislead us as it so often does? These, in fact, were the arguments of Martin Luther in his famous exchange with Erasmus. Malebranche's reply is that God follows reason in all that He does, that the second person of the Trinity is the Word or Reason, and that **that** reason is incorruptible; it is our inner teacher, insofar as we are able to learn to see by the light of the mind. And, as with St. Augustine, Malebranche argues that "evidence, or understanding, is preferable to faith. For faith will pass away, but understanding will endure eternally" (I/2/11). If I discover that I have little ability to reason, or cannot sustain the labor of attention for very long, then, yes, it is more sensible to acquire moral virtue through relying on grace or the counsel of others, for in that way I will still learn, and come to feel the love of what is good and how it is good, without understanding it; some people will in fact find this avenue the most available one. But reason is a more solid foundation, if available due to one's gifts. Therefore in proportion as one has reasoning capacity, faith is not antithetical, but is complementary to it. For, as I show below, we are built and thus able to learn by two pathways, the light of the mind and the inner feeling given to us by grace on the occasion of

experiencing a particular being. It is not an act of faith to deny this inward search for understanding, this inward turning to the light of the mind provided by Reason. For Malebranche, to oppose reason by faith is poor theology and poor philosophy.

For Descartes, as for most orthodox Christians and philosophers of the time, man is said to have a "free will" by nature or by God's creation, such that its wise or foolish use explains both human error and evil, and human knowledge and moral worth. However, for Malebranche – who here is closer to the ancient Greek and the Augustinian tradition – our 'will' is not a 'faculty' at all. We have a given, natural capacity to see or to hear, such that as soon as an infant is born and breathing, it will begin to see and hear; this is what is meant by a 'faculty' to do something – that there is an innate capacity to do it, which matures or develops and functions in all or most people. Many saw a "free will" as another such faculty. But Malebranche challenges the notion that there is a faculty of free will, because if there were, people would be freely willing at or soon after birth, or at least it would develop and become active during childhood. The facts are quite different, he argues: with St. Augustine, Malebranche's concept is that we are born naturally loving the good in general, wanting to be happy. We are inclined to move toward what seems to us to be good, and to avoid or move away from what seems to us to be bad. But freedom is something different, and hard to acquire – for it would mean the ability to love things and actions insofar as they are lovable, loving them for just what they are, no more and no less. Yet this is hard to do; to learn how to do it and to become able to do it regularly, habitually, is, for Malebranche, the central problem of the science of ethics. We cannot keep ourselves from loving, from affirming or wanting this and denying or avoiding that. But we can investigate what it would take to be able to distinguish between the times we love wisely, and the times we love foolishly, and what are the pertinent differences between those two choices. Far from being 'given' a free will, then, the central question in ethics, for Malebranche as for Aristotle and St. Augustine is, how might we become able to choose wisely rather than foolishly? In one word, this is the question of 'virtue' – which Malebranche defines as the dominant and stable habit of loving all that there is in accord with God's Order (that is, loving in relation to what the thing is). The formation of moral character is concerned with acquiring the skills and dispositions we need in order habitually to act in constructive or appropriate ways rather than harmfully or errantly.

As for our use of the term 'good', God is good unequivocally; but created beings are 'goods', good in this or that way as created within the overall Order, which correlates every being and sort of being with all others in one whole world. By contrast, pleasure and pain are differently understood. Again with Plato and Aristotle, pleasure and pain are not the causes of what is good for us in a food or a friendship, etc., but rather they are the **effects** of choosing that food or acting a certain way in that friendship, etc. They come to us after the deed, so that their relationship to the benefit or harm of the choice is not clear. Sometimes we have learned to feel pleasure at something that is not good for

us, or to feel pain at something that is beneficial; sometimes our feelings are confusing, made up of elements we do not understand, often in powerful combinations. Therefore if we want to be able to distinguish before the deed, to judge the difference between a wise and a foolish action, we cannot use pleasure or pain as markers 'straightaway'; we must undertake to study how these feelings came to be compounded as they are, and to what they are related and how, before we can understand the significance of these feelings. So we must use our reasoning ability experimentally, learning to ask which motives should be attached to which objects or deeds in which ways, in order to choose only what pertains appropriately to that object.

Our acts of loving, or 'willings', are motivated by either of two sources, in Malebranche's analysis – either by the light of the mind, or by pleasure we feel. When we know what we are doing, and taste the delight or pain of doing it, the fact of the feeling of pleasure or pain is out of our control as-such – it simply occurs as an effect. That is, we do not control pleasure or pain, as their occurrences are automatically and generally related to their causes by physiological laws. But we can and do control, or can learn to control our power of attention.

For these reasons, Malebranche holds that we love either 'naturally and necessarily', or else 'freely and reasonably' – these are two ends of a continuum, ranging as it does from entirely beyond one's control to entirely within one's control. And the entire continuum of relationships among ways of being motivated, of loving, and the various objects or deeds we choose, is a continuum within God's Order, such that these relationships are intelligible in principle. How are we to discover these relationships? An experimental science of ethics undertakes that task by study of the senses, imagination, and passions, to distinguish which of these is involved and how (see below).

As mentioned earlier, there is actually only one virtue – the dominant and habitual love of Order – because all particular virtues such as courage or self-control or steadfastness of character and so forth depend on this one as foundational. Our habits can be shaped in many ways – by custom, or social pressures, or fear, or selfishness, so that a habit is only virtuous if, or to the extent that, it is formed in accord with the love of God's Order. Our task as moral agents is to make that quality of loving become habitual. And, repeatedly, Malebranche emphasizes that "insofar as" we **do** develop this virtue, we are loving **as** God loves, and so, *a fortiori*, becoming like unto God in that way, as well as we are able to do at that time. Thus our own being is becoming better qualitatively through this moral practice. At this point Malebranche notes for the first time that love can be differentiated into three kinds:

(1) love-as-union, which means loving something as willing to be at one with it, a love which belongs to God and only to God as the One from whom we came and with whom is our lasting good;
(2) love-as-friendliness, or respect, which refers to wishing well to the other for the other's own sake; and
(3) love-as-esteem, which refers to loving something or someone insofar as we estimate that object to possess a particular quality or trait.

'Respect' belongs in some measure to **every** being, since every being, by virtue of being brought into being by God, is deserving of some love for whatever quality it has; no being is without its own appropriate good, and, thus, its own appropriate lovability.

Here we ought to add that what Malebranche calls 'enlightened self-love' belongs in love-as-esteem, because while self-love, unenlightened, is a random and natural loving without awareness, an enlightened self-love is one instance of loving someone for their own sake insofar as they are lovable, no more and no less.

Our acts make habits; but habits can be broken and new ones formed. We see this easily in examples such as dancing or carpentry. But we do not see it so clearly with our character, for there, we believe we can change ourselves quickly, and by one action become a different person (I/4/2). But this is not true. Why, then, do we believe it? Because we believe that our 'will' is just what it seems to us to be, from moment to moment – we are not conscious of our own dispositions to will and act in particular ways because of our habits. So we believe we are 'freely willing' when, in fact, we naturally love the good in general and want to be happy, and (in Malebranche's phrase) 'determine' our willings to particular objects in particular ways and times. We take this or that object to be what it seems to us to be, and determine our loving toward it on that foundation at that time, depending on how our character interprets that object. The upshot is that God – and other people – judge us by how we usually or habitually act, rather than by this or that isolated action we may have performed out of character.

What, then, are we to do in order to develop our character well? Each act must be determined, one way or another; that is what it means to act. That is, actively or passively, consciously or unconsciously, we *specify* this motivation and estimation for this object at this time for this reason or because of this feeling – *that* is what Malebranche refers to as '*determining*' our action. Thus, he reasons, if we undertake to develop the "parent-habit" of the love of God's Order, then other, particular habits will develop well in their own way.

We can work on this in two ways – by way of the light of reason, or by way of feeling; no habit can be formed without one of those two principles of the movements of our being as moral agents. The light of reason is occasioned only by attention, and attention requires that we turn away, so to speak, from the input of the senses, imagination, and passions in order to concentrate our thoughts. He therefore proposes that the first practical habit we need to develop is one he calls "the STRENGTH of the mind" – meaning the ability to prevent ourselves from being distracted by every incoming sensory signal, or every internally-generated fantasy or imagining or passion that comes along. Any of these can be enough to trigger us into a natural and necessary loving, that is, an automatic and knee-jerk response, out of our control and without reflection. To gain the strength to resist and inhibit such a jerky way of living, to resist the dissipation of our potential for attention, requires 'strength of the mind'. Malebranche suggests a number of ways to support and cultivate the building of

that strength.

As the strength of the mind develops, it becomes possible to turn to its vital companion virtue, which Malebranche calls "the FREEDOM of the mind"; it, too, must be acquired, built up by acts into a habit of mind. It means the ability to suspend consent, to hold off and refrain from loving or hating, seeking or avoiding, until one has had time to examine what it is that we are about to love, and why, and in what way, on what evidence. Only when an act of loving something is based on conscious understanding of these factors can that love be said to be a free love (as compared to a 'natural and necessary', unconscious love). And, as we recall, it is only by way of acts of freely-judged and chosen loving that a habit of loving in that way can be nurtured.

Taken together, these two habits, if used well, make possible the conscious use of our attention to occasion the light of the mind within us, and – what goes with such a free or liberated use of our capacity – to occasion a contempt for being controlled by our passions, imagination or senses.

Theologically, Malebranche understands Jesus Christ as the occasional cause of the grace of feeling, in a specific way: the act of the Christian worshipper in approaching the sacraments, even if only by way of a momentary love for Order, is converted into a habit of love for Order because of grace being regularly associated with that act in a dependable way. (In Chapter 9, Malebranche then discusses the roles played by angels, saints, and demons in the overall system of the laws by which God's grace is organized and distributed or associated with particular types of human acts and motives.) It will become more apparent shortly that this topic of Jesus Christ as the occasional cause of the grace of feeling gains importance as we turn to the problem of how to judge our feelings: that is, in a given case, we will have a complex of feelings about a particular thing, and that complex can be analyzed. There will be one aspect due to our sensory information, another due to our imagination, a third due to any passion we have acquired concerning it, and a fourth due to what the thing actually is, its lovability in Order, which we do and should feel within as what Malebranche calls "an inner feeling". Thus the ability to distinguish each of these four components of a complex feeling becomes vital to our overall assessment of what we feel, – an assessment we need to make before we decide how, why, and in which way to act toward that object.

At this point (Part I, Chap. 10) Malebranche notes that there are occasional causes of the feelings and motions by which we resist the graces of light and of feeling. We are created in a relationship to God, and in a relationship to our bodies; God instituted the latter relationship for the sake of conserving our life on earth. Thus too, within Order there are laws of that relation – as when a bee's sting always hurts, or when an adequate meal always nourishes us. But it is an error to think that the sting causes pain, or the meal pleasure; rather, pleasure and pain are associated with these phenomena by way of general laws that we can learn by experience. How, then, are we to learn how the senses, imagination and passions work? As I have shown, this must be asked, both because we need these capacities in order to live, and because we need to be able to distinguish

between their working, on the one hand, which has to do with our bodies and the ways our bodies influence and are influenced by our minds, and, on the other hand, the real lovability of beings in the world, which we need to know in order to love wisely. Malebranche turns first to the senses.

The purpose of the senses is to enable us to conserve our bodies, our sensible being. We need to learn which objects serve this good, and how to make proper use of them in order to choose rightly and avoid damaging them or ourselves. Yet we cannot judge a sensible good by how it stimulates our bodies because that stimulation is only for the purpose of conservation and is not an indicator of some good within that sensed object as-such; in fact, in terms of our spiritual well-being, there is no good in sensible objects as such. From this analysis, Malebranche begins to lay out his program for study of the senses, imagination and passions.

The job of the imagination is to act as a center where the "animal spirits", or impulses from our nerve-endings, come together to form composite sense-images, such as when the feel, color, and sound of an object are compounded into one whole image of that object. When we pay attention to this image, that attention is the occasional cause of forming what Malebranche calls "traces" in our brain, traces to which sense-images attach themselves by association. This process establishes what one might call the psychosomatic, or somatopsychic headquarters of our brain – the place where our minds and bodies are entwined: the senses affect us, our health and well-being, and we develop ideas of things to avoid or to prefer, based on these images. These ideas also work in the other direction, as well; that is, they can lead us to look for those things, or look out for them and avoid them. And we can become completely overwhelmed by either of these two directions of the operation of the imagination between our senses and our minds: we can become preoccupied by incoming images, so as to be unable to pay attention to any other evidence, or we can be preoccupied with traces we have developed that dispose us to see, hear or feel certain perceptions. It is interesting to note that in 1924, Victor Delbos saw Malebranche's work toward an experimental science of the senses, imagination, and passions in relationship to character formation as the precursor to the James-Lange theory of emotion. It is located here, in the *Treatise on Ethics*, because a strong mind would be one whose mental health derives from its awareness of these processes sufficient to know how they work in order to control them. Such control enables us to build up those traces we need for the conservation of our bodies – as when we eat, drink, sleep, or avoid dangers and seek good exercise habitually, even semi-automatically, and, for the same reasons avoid those traces that would be harmful or morally "out of order", inappropriate, defective, or excessive.

The purpose of the senses and imagination in this context is to produce passions – inner traces by which we automatically react to stimuli, which passions we need in order to survive. That is, we need immediate recognition and appropriate seeking or avoiding of objects in order to eat or drink adequately, to avoid bodily danger, and so forth. Our capacity for passions, then, is

given to us for the sake of the well-being of our physical health and the conservation of our being. In addition, we are so-constituted that we are able to develop feedback loops, "a continual circulation of feelings and movements that sustain and reproduce themselves" (I/13/2) from the senses to the imagination to passions and back to the senses and thus, to action. These loops are governed in an "admirable" way in God's Order, e.g., when we see or otherwise sense danger, the information gets to our passions and adrenalin is injected into our blood streams, thereby heightening our capacity to cope with the danger through appropriate, even forceful action – usually quickly and without thinking (I/12/6). It is due to these loops that we are able to conserve our health, reproduce our species, carry on a large part of interpersonal relationships of every kind, and acquire goods of the senses and of interpersonal commerce (though these goods are not the kinds that have to do with the merit or lovability of things).

However, this semi-automatic system can mistake signals, or be triggered by false alarms leading to too little or too much of a response. In either of these cases, needs or feelings could be wrongly silenced or fired up to a frenzy – all due to a disordered imagination if weakness of the mind prevails. Thus strength of the mind requires special attention be given to distinguishing the orderly from the disorderly, the healthful from the harmful operations of the senses, imagination, and passions. The goods of the body and the passions are strictly instrumental; we have them, we need them, and the passions conducive to them have a vital role to play. But we need to be able to "hold them up to Order", scan them and check them out to be sure they are doing what they are meant to do, and neither more nor less.

The workings of the passions in our nervous system, as detailed, are not, in the strictest sense, evaluative acts. They must be considered and identified for what they are, setting the evaluation of moral feeling as a separate task. At their best, the passions' functions are unconscious and instantaneous. But we need to be able to analyze their formation and transformation because they can either bring about harm if wrongly understood, or can so powerfully distract us as to make the freedom of the mind impossible. And thus, their study has this location within Malebranche's larger study. As with beliefs, so with passions their usually-automatic functions can enable us to live far more effectively than we would without them – Malebranche gives the example of being able, without thought, to want, eat and digest an apple. So long as we do not assign any more significance to our passions' functions than they require, we can proceed freely to consider more complex questions of relative evaluation of goods.

Malebranche expended considerable effort on this issue. For example, he is one of the first to propose a mental health explanation for the behavior of women who were taken to be witches, and men taken to be witch-hunters and -haters (see *Search After Truth* II/3/6). He also analyzed what he called "le bel esprit", the sophisticate, who dwells so much in imagination and passions as to virtually populate his world with dark or flashy fantasies, exaggerated praises

and blamings, flattery and rumor to the extent that body, soul, and civil society are all harmed by his excesses. One can not avoid thinking that this study of "le bel esprit" was prompted by the social set hovering around Louis XIV's court at Versailles (see I/12/14–21).

With these foundations laid so that the strength of the mind can be cultivated and, using that strength, the freedom of the mind developed, how would we then use this hard-won freedom of the mind? Unlike Descartes, whose answer is that we should concentrate only on clear and distinct ideas, Malebranche replies that we ought to concentrate either on clear ideas **or on incontestable experiences** (I/5/12–19). By the latter he means that, due to the way we are built, "the sensible order lifts the mind to knowledge of the intelligible order"; that is, contemplation alone does not move us, but since the things that there are not only are, in certain ways, but are loved by God in appropriate ways, they therefore move us to love them as well as to know or understand them – both. And because *both* the intelligible *and* the felt are ordered and orderly in principle, we may experience the good or the lovability of an object by way of inner feeling as our first experience of it, and then by way of reflection on that experience, develop further understanding of it. For Malebranche, the Holy Spirit is the link, here – God the Father, as power, makes things be; God the Son, as Reason or the Word, makes them be intelligible; and God the Spirit, as Love, makes them be loved and felt by us **as** lovable; the latter feeling is what he means by 'incontestable experience'. We have two kinds of incontestable experiences – those taught to us by faith, and those of which we are convinced by inner feeling.

How are we to study our inner feelings, in order to understand what they tell us about the loved object? Much of the theoretical answer to this question has been given already: [1] we do it by the strength of the mind, so as not to be distracted by what might seem to be inner feeling but which is really part of the virtually-mechanical nervous system comprising sensation, imagination, and passions as they come to be linked or looped into quick-response systems for the conduct of physical and physiological life. [2] We do it by use of the freedom of the mind, by which we distinguish what component is what, when the feeling is a mixed feeling, and focus attention on the inner feeling of the esteem or lovability of the object in its own right, for what it is rather than what it may or may not be doing for us physically (that has already been accounted for, at [1] above). [3] We know that the object, whatever it is, will be what it is both in terms of magnitude or quantitative relationships, which cannot change and are therefore known "speculatively" by clear ideas with necessity, and also in terms of its "perfection" or qualitative relationships, which change and are therefore known "practically". To know a practical truth means to acquire empirical ideas of working or active relationships, whose truth can be only as well-founded as we can corroborate at specific times under particular circumstances, "as well as can be done" – something which is true for any experimental science. Unfeeling intellect lacking space-time specifics cannot know these truths deductively *a priori*. Finally, [4] Malebranche finds that there

are two kinds of occasional causes of enlightenment of the mind, namely [1] our power of attention, and [2] our inner feeling of the worth of an act or being. This latter occasional cause Malebranche denominates "Jesus Christ as-man".

He uses this theological term as the occasional cause of that which is incontestable within the experience being studied, namely its reliability, once it is reflectively filtered out from our experience of imagination and passions. This conative experience is direct, empirical evidence of what the object is as-lovable within God's Order. Our souls can be moved in various ways, just as can our bodies. What moves our souls are our inner feelings of the lovability of events, objects, and other persons. When we assess these movings or lovings, on the basis of this evidence, we are then able reasonably to love them for what they are. Malebranche is aware that these inner feelings are complex and that they comprise a variety of circumstances – the possible combinations are immense, as when someone loved is changing frequently.

This complexity and changeability only underscores why our work on this assessment must be experimental, open to reconsideration of new evidence later. But when we do it, "as well as we can", then at that moment, our capacity to love becomes actual, which, in Malebranche's theological phrase, means that we 'determine' the Holy Spirit at this time and this way toward this object. Put differently, we are loving something wisely, and thus at the same time, by that act, becoming ourselves more habituated to loving wisely because of the act that strengthens the habit. (Aristotle discussed the same thing in Book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics*: by doing something well we become better at doing it, so that well-being and doing-well are reciprocally related; in his own vocabulary, Malebranche is explaining the same process both here, and also, below, in his Part Two, chapters 4, 5 and 14.[14]) Since virtue is the love of Order, we develop that virtue insofar as Order becomes *known* to us, speculatively and practically, but also insofar as it *orders our acts* of loving and choosing.

V. PART TWO OF MALEBRANCHE'S *ETHICS*, ON DUTY

Turning to Part Two, On Duties, Malebranche begins by reminding us that even a just person can do an evil deed. The reminder is meant to bring back the primary meaning of a strongly and freely choosing moral character, namely one who habitually loves God's Order. This means that only God can be loved in a 'love-as-union', as the One who alone can make us, and make us happy; all created beings are to be loved, then, in a 'love-as-friendliness', a love predicated not on what this or that person or other being can do for me, but for what he is. Love-as-esteem, finally, is based on individual merit and is not universalizable. It is based on an informed understanding of that particular person.

Yet even then, it is possible for us to act toward someone in a harmful way in a particular act, to do harm when our more regular disposition is beneficial and soundly-based. For Malebranche, this fact leads to investigation of the ethics of duty. That is, just because we cannot always rely on even our most just and

stable habits, because even the best of us are sometimes upset by passions, and because many of our deeds are not so much personal as social, we must add to our study of virtue another study, of the kinds of social situations in which we find ourselves, in order to seek a less-personal, more generic understanding of these kinds as they are correlated within the system of relations comprising Order. For from that angle of study, it becomes possible to "go further", as Malebranche puts it, beyond developing a virtuous character, by adding to it the ability to govern our love "by means of an exact knowledge of our duties" (II/I/1 & 2).

This is a crucial turn in his argument; why, all of a sudden, is it not enough that we work for the strength and freedom of the mind so as to become able, as well as we can, habitually to love each being insofar as it is lovable? His answer is that we are vulnerable to self-righteousness or pride, that just because we might be maturing in our character, and realizing that we are usually living and choosing justly, we may develop what he calls an "ardor of instinct" by which we would tend to become self-involved in a way of acting because it is, in fact, habitual – and thus violate a duty we owe due to our own place in the Order of creation. That is, phrased differently, duties are actions required not because of who I am, but because I am in a particular kind of social relationship, and as such duties are one large class (actually having three sub-classes, duties to God, to others, and to self) of actions within the overall framework of virtue as an habitual love of Order. Therefore virtue becomes actualized, often, through doing our duties, because much of what we do in fact is within recurring relationships characterized in part by what each member owes to the other – as a husband and wife, a parent and a child, a subject and his sovereign, or two friends.

Here the ethics of character and virtue meets the ethics of duty and obedience – for we are both being affected by the kinds of roles we must play and the obligations we have to others, and they to us, and at the same time are active players who change the quality of those relationships by our being and our choices such that (consequently) the duties involved will change as well. Malebranche's way of investigating this, what we might see as the interpersonal, social, and political ethics complementary to the ethics of character within his overall theory, is to consider kinds of situations typical of the moral life irrespective of the biographical details of the moral agents in that situation. In any given case of moral choice, we are simultaneously (a) acting, which act will strengthen or counter a habit, and thus directly affect our being, and also (b) acting toward some other being also affected for good or ill, harmed or benefitted. Some of these effects on others are *ad hoc*, just belonging to the one case or instance. But many of them belong to continuing relationships or bonds which *themselves* have being and a continuing quality – such as family, employment, worship, citizenship, or – finally – the continuing quality of relationship between myself as a moral agent and my own possible "perfection", as Malebranche calls it (my intellectual and moral development). Because he sees each of these duties as having some structure within God's

larger physical-moral Order, he can investigate them one area at a time.

Before embarking on kinds of duties, Malebranche proposes a summary observation akin to Aristotle's observation that a morally excellent action is one that is freely deliberated, arises from a habit of so-doing, and is consciously chosen. To quote, such an act, for Malebranche, requires "First, that we examine the action itself, and all its attendant circumstances, as much as possible; second, suspend consent until evidence tips the scales or suspend carrying out the act until necessity forbids further hesitation; [and] Third, we should obey the [now-] known Order promptly, exactly, and inviolably ... [for] it is the love of Order that ought to animate these three [steps] through which love is enabled to appear to the eyes of the world, and sanctify all our steps before God" (II/1/4). With this in mind, he turns to investigate our duties to God, each other, and ourselves; but it will not be possible to set up a category for every single duty we owe, for such an effort would prove impossible. Therefore, at the outset we need to understand that what follows is not a rule-book, or thorough list of duties; "every person must [still] examine his own particular duties in relation to these general and essential obligations *and also according to the circumstances of the moment* " (II/1/5, emphasis added).

Our first duties are to God, for as we are created in His image, that image is the model for our own improvement – in three ways: we are to become submissive to His power, united in His wisdom, and perfectly similar to Him in the movements of our hearts. God is not merely the object of speculative duties of contemplation. This might be done in isolation and along side a morally reprehensible life. God is not, as with Descartes, simply "infinitely perfect Being", but is also characterized by attributes that move us to act and be in certain ways "imitative" of Him. Piety is not merely or solely abstract, as might be seen in overdressed courtly figures meditating ostentatiously in church yet oblivious to the suffering and need of their wounded, ill, or hungry fellow-humans outside or at the back of the church (cf. II/2/3).

To God's power, we are submissive because we depend on Him for our lives, we act only by what strength we are given, and can do nothing without it. To God's wisdom, we are united to Him and to each other by way of the light it sheds in our minds enabling us to communicate and share truth without any loss to ourselves, and by it we are rendered reasonable, able to see speculative and practical truths. To God's spirit or love, we are moved only by it, to love the good in general, to seek to become happy, and to love particular beings in appropriate ways by the action of grace that makes things lovable in their ways and makes us able to feel that lovability in our own experiences.

These three kinds of duties to God become practical when Malebranche asks what judgments flow from them. What inferences are to be drawn from each of them for practical purposes? A few examples will have to suffice. Concerning God's power, one judgment is that we ought not to hate the occasional cause of a physical evil, such as a flood or forest-fire, for the harm it does; another is that because God gives us our time, we ought not to waste it. Concerning God's Wisdom, some of the judgments derivable are that since God enlightens our

minds from within, we ought not to call other people our teachers, but, rather, our mentors; or, when we have some understanding to share with others, not to speak to them as a "schoolmaster", but only as a mentor who might lead them to the Teacher through questions that help them turn within to search in their own minds. Finally, examples of judgments derived from consideration of God as Holy Spirit or love, are that we are able to love an evil as if it were a good because of error, through which we mis-use love or deny what we inwardly feel due to overriding passions; again, it flows from this reflection that we ought not to attribute our own good or evil to any other beings with whom we have relationships of any kind, for their being does not make us what we are, any more than we can make them be what they are. They are neither good nor evil *"as related to us"* (II/4/4, emphasis added). Our natural desire to be happy is exemplified in our duties to God as power, for only God can "make" us become happy in the univocal sense of the verb (through "love-as-union"). But our desire to mature, to become better than we are, to develop and grow, requires more than natural impulse – it requires artifice, the skills of loving well and with care – and these are "seen", as it were, in regard to God as love and the duties that flow from "love-as-friendliness" or "love-as-esteem".

Our duties in society arise from the fact that we are made to live with each other under Reason on which each of us is dependent for understanding. Some of Malebranche's contemporaries interpreted St. Augustine's distinction between the City of God and the earthly city to mean that there are really two ethics – one for spiritual questions, "unto God", and another for secular questions, "unto Caesar". But this will not work – there is only one Order, and no conduct can be both right in society and wrong in God's sight, or *vice versa.* It is true that earthly society is characterized by perishable goods and the heavenly city is characterized by lasting goods. But the heavenly city does not "begin" "after" we die; we are parts of it now, it is timeless, it was and is and will be, so that it is a mistake to set up two ethics. Rather, Malebranche argues, "we are to begin here below, by means of the [love for Order] we are obliged to have for each other" (II/6/4). To emphasize this point, he brings it up again in a different way: "Let people say as often as they want to that the laws of civil society must be separated from those of Christian charity, it still seems to me that they are inseparable in practice" (II/8/7).

Under love-as-friendliness, one way to study this broad category is to consider deference or honor – as toward God, or toward a person toward whom we owe loyalty or service, or to whose achievement we defer. The duties that pertain to honor can be due either to a submission in our mind because we recognize true power, or it can be done by showing an outward and visible sign of submission and respect to people because of their position in society, or (finally) we can express our esteem toward people because of what they are, the perfection or achievement they have attained. The first of these, submission, applies only to God. The second applies to those who, by law or legitimate customs, are authorized to carry out functions in relationship to which we are subjects and to whom we therefore owe respect. The third, esteem, of course,

we owe to everyone in proportion as we are able to estimate his or her current accomplishment for what it is (their "lovability" in Order). Thus submission, respect and esteem are the three general principles of all our duties to God and others in society.

To deepen his analysis, Malebranche turns first to friendliness – since "we need to live with men", and find human company to be "refreshing to our minds". Here, our duty is to share our goods with those who are capable of sharing in them. The goods of reason and of the spirit can be shared without diminution, so that no one goes without when the other benefits; these he calls "true goods" for that reason (II/8/2). This can mean a duty to hurt a friend if he is inwardly divided and our words undertake to clarify that conflict; for part of him may resent this confusion being discussed. Yet it is not friendliness to abandon a person because he is at cross-purposes within himself. We should still "hope to restrain [him] by example, by patience, by counsel, [or] by gifts of grace" (II/8/11).

Second, in the area of submission or respect to the social or political role played by a person, Malebranche treats this topic first in terms of non-political relationships, and then (below) politically. In the first group, then, we would consider those we take to be our equals, and the respect we owe to them. To them we show "an inner respect" as if they were our superiors, because we understand why their being deserves respect due to their invisible relation to God, the way they live within God's Order. Sometimes this refers to actual merit or virtue we see in them; at other times we show this respect because we see that it might be helpful to them as they try to become what they can. Toward those whom we see as "below" us, of less maturity or accomplishment in some area of life, our duties are to treat them as friends and equals.

These concepts of 'above', 'equal' and 'below' – so prevalent in the society around Malebranche, the world of Louis XIV with great emphasis on rank and social status – are, to Malebranche, "equivocal", and hard to determine, because someone might be "beneath" me in one sort of function and "above" me in another – not to mention that that person's status in the sight of God would depend on what God sees in that person's soul, a power we do not have. Custom may place a judge as superior to a priest, and so forth. This is why Malebranche distinguished between showing the outward signs of respect, which, for example, a judge would require by virtue of his place in the judicial system, on the one hand, and showing the signs that come from an inward esteem and respect due to evaluation of who the person actually is – which might be quite another matter – on the other hand. But in all of these cases the minimum of moral duty toward the other person is to treat him or her as an equal, according to the principle of respect. The reason for the duty of respect is that "the chief aim of our duties is to conserve charity amongst men, and to become bound to them in a tender and durable amity, in order to be able to be useful to them, and that they may be useful to us. Now, to achieve this, our duties must be sincere, or at least it must be probable that we place other men in our own estimation as we indicate externally that we place them" (II/12/8).

Most of our relationships involve duties of simple esteem, since this is the category including each relationship in terms of one's perfection or merit – and that can be due to natural talents, or accomplishments, in any of a variety of functions in society. Most of the bonds between people in society arise from how we perform the duties of esteem. The one corrosive attitude, which destroys social bonds, is to show contempt for a person; that, Malebranche notes, is the greatest of hurts. Only nothingness deserves contempt; all reality deserves esteem (II/7/2). Even criminals deserves esteem – not for their conduct, but for their being, "their person" (II/7/4).

Merit or esteem is notoriously hard to gauge – there are countless varieties. One aid in approaching them is to distinguish between natural merit and that associated with religion or the state; the first would have to do with development of a person's aptitudes or talents, the latter with a function performed in society through institutional activity. The distinction helps because our actions that fulfill duties take place in some particular context, which means that the other persons involved must understand our action as appropriate in that context if we are to get across our intent, or do the action that would be taken to signify what we want to express. As with other duties, the duties of esteem are owed for the sake of the preservation of bonds without which society cannot exist; thus this is not the place for us to question customs and social practices (that comes later, concerning our inward acts of loving and directly personal or spiritual questions). Rather, here it is a matter of how our action might be of use to ourselves and others in society. And in **that** context, for example, we might show more respect for a high-ranking judge whom we know to be of less than sterling character than we would show to an auto mechanic whom we know to be remarkably honest. That is, the outward action of public demeanor shown toward the judge must fulfill our respect for that office, whereas our outward action toward the mechanic is not intended to fulfill **that** particular function in society. The first merit or esteem is relative to the judge's function in society; the second merit or esteem is not relative to any social function or bond but has to do with who the person is as a person, irrespective of his work as an auto mechanic; this is why our analysis of the duties we owe in the first set of cases may be quite separate from and unlike the duties we owe in the second set of cases.

Generally, Malebranche sees broad areas of duties of respect, of esteem, and of friendliness – and they can overlap, or conflict. There is no rule of ordering here, no *a priori* principle to sort them out or make our path an easy one. In fact, Malebranche emphasizes this by saying that "there is no general rule, none without thousands and thousands of exceptions for guiding us in the duties of esteem, or respect, or friendliness that we ought to render to other men" (II/7/14).

How are these social duties to be fulfilled? Polite conversation may not suffice, since, regrettably or simply as a matter of fact, it is put to so many other uses, including deception. Therefore the duties of friendship, respect, and esteem are, all three, more a matter of premeditated acts – "sensible marks" by

which we make our evaluations understood, so that the other person can see the place he or she holds in our heart and mind. Persons are occasional causes of society, their actions are associated with how they see their relationships in it. Therefore we avoid society with those who scorn us; we seek society with those who offer us some assurance that we are either respected, esteemed, or befriended.

There are three ways we can fulfill duties to others – by the "natural language" of our facial expressions, by way of services, or (broadly) by making ourselves lovable so as to be able to be loved by, or be of some service to others.

Our manner and facial expression will usually "tell" our thought or attitude more effectively than words – and may even give the lie to our words if we try to deceive. Expressions can mislead, of course. But this works both ways, because sometimes we find it hard to feel the appropriate feeling of respect, submission, or even tender love, yet know that it is appropriate for this person at this time and is expected. In cases like this, we need, therefore, to learn how to show to the other person the expression he or she expects, or to be able effectively to show that person the esteem or respect, etc., which is due and which we want to communicate. This means we have to develop some control over our facial expressions and to observe the other person to learn how he or she responds or anticipates. And of course we need to recall that the same expression can be taken differently by different people. We cannot fake these expressions, at least not for long, because other actions would belie them. But we can do a sort of induced simulation for the right reasons, if, for example, someone whom we know needs and deserves our respect is encountered just when we have had a bad setback or are exhausted and unlikely spontaneously to show the feeling we have for them. In that case we bring ourselves to look and act appropriately because we are able to do it and we want to fulfill our obligation to this person who deserves it. This latter is not hypocrisy, for the respect or esteem is genuine; it is a kind of acting, but only because what we would normally have done anyway was not immediately forthcoming from us, yet we recognize how important it is to the other person to show the needed and deserved response. Another side to this same discussion is that sometimes we meet with a person whom we have reason to believe does in fact hold us in some esteem, respect, or friendship, yet historically has a hard time saying so or showing any outward sign of the relationship. Knowing what we know about the importance of such signs to ourselves, we might find it easier to forgive the more reticent person, or to prevent ourselves from being hurt when our normal expectation is not fulfilled.

Second, and the most reliable way of convincing others that we esteem them in some way, is to perform some "real service" for them. Yet this is also the hardest to do, and that difficulty explains why some of our friends and acquaintances do not show their esteem for us by actions – they cannot bring themselves to figure out some action that would convey it (in fact, Malebranche observes, they may also have trouble doing something loving for themselves).

Finally, we are sometimes able to consider how we might become more lovable to another particular person whom we would know or serve and, in general, we can undertake to become useful to others in the ways available through our particular talents. Love and esteem are different – we are loved as we make ourselves lovable to others; but we may make ourselves worthy of esteem in their eyes and yet they might not make the effort to recognize the evidence of our accomplishment and so fail to show any recognition of it. The former is more readily felt, the latter requires more reflection and conscious action. Lovability involves being good or seeming to others to be a person with whom they would be contented rather than aggravated; it involves cultivating our aptitudes to be able to be useful as we can, and negatively it involves not attacking others where they are vulnerable, or focussing attention on where they are most easily hurt (II/13/4).

Our political duties deserve separate consideration, for they have to do with the institution of the civil state where function and security properly belong, and so are logically separable from friendship, esteem, or the kind of respect we discuss in strictly-social relationships. Power and obedience are almost synonymous with the reign of Louis XIV, and indeed are the only concepts considered by some of the political thinkers of the period. Malebranche is not known as a political thinker; his only work on the subject is in the *Treatise on Ethics*. He might have followed Descartes, who expressed in the *Discourse* his lack of interest in being burned at the stake or brought up before the Inquisition, and so – or it would seem so – separated reason from faith, and morals from physics. He left political and social ethics to the church or to the advice of Pyrrho the skeptic, "when in Rome, do as the Romans do". He touched ethics only obliquely through his treatment of mental illness and mental health in the *Passions of the Soul*, where ethics is virtually reduced to how to become tranquil or achieve a stress-free life. Malebranche, by contrast and as I showed above, rejects the 'two ethics' approach, one for Caesar and one for God. He does not undertake a 'science of natural justice' as does Hobbes, nor a treatise on civil government as does Locke at about the same time, nor any exploration of the kinds and justifications of law as do Grotius and Pufendorf. As with all other writers living under Louis XIV, he had to obtain royal approval in order to be published. Ironically, this treatise obtained that approval readily, only to have its section on duties put on the church's Index of forbidden books in 1687! The irony is that although the treatise is filled with consideration of Christian thought and duties to God and, among others, to priests, it contains direct examination of abuse of power, "grandeur", injustice and questionable uses of authority, any of which might well have brought trouble with the King, yet did not.[15]

However, the question of situating Malebranche, even as a minor figure, in the history of political thought, requires some delicacy. In the traditional and orthodox Christian way, he treats our duties to the sovereign and his administration as duties to "power by participation", that is, a power delegated by God to the King in order to maintain earthly order to secure the lives of the subjects

during their time on earth. These duties reduce to two kinds – respect, and obedience. Laws and customs determine the first, and the showing of the appropriate outward signs of respect is a matter of behavior – as how one bows before the King, or how one speaks to one of his ministers. Those who have this power-by-participation, and those subject to it, face serious dangers of abuse – at either end of the relationship. To make one's delegated share of power, as an official in the government, to serve one's own pleasure, or pride, or desires, is to commit a crime before God. No person deserves pride because of power he exercises via God's delegating it to his office. And, on the part of the subject, even though a king or his ministers might surround themselves with great pomp and ceremony, lavish displays of riches or state ritual, it is wrong for us to fear them because of this; only God is to be feared, and only when we act unjustly. God does not expect us to fawn over or flatter His earthly agents. Our proper duties of respect and submission are outward and relative – to the authority vested in the office held. It is not this or that person whom we honor in doing this, but God Who alone truly is power. And respect is shown to authority in proportion as that authority is exercising it – for example, we show more respect for a judge on the bench than for the judge while he is eating his lunch. These duties, Malebranche notes, "cost us almost nothing to render" – they are matters of protocol only.

Duties of obedience are a different matter, for to obey the orders of a political superior may run against our self-love, and also because rights can conflict, making it harder for us to tell whom to obey and how much. To help clear this up, Malebranche distinguishes between civil and ecclesiastical authority; the church is related to God as Wisdom, the state to God as Power. Princes can make laws and enforce them; the church is to teach, heal, and guide. Yet each is to use its authority as God does, to model itself after Him in the appropriate way. The prince does not have to explain every law, but a law must reflect Reason – for not even God has a right to make laws against Reason. God is essentially just, Reason is His law, and His power is guided and governed by it; so too should be the law-making efforts of the earthly sovereign. A citizen cannot demand an explanation of a law from the sovereign, but he can question it within his conscience; there are even some circumstances in which conscience and reflection can lead us to disobey what we see to be an unjust law. But in that extreme case, our appeal is not to the King's justice, but to God's justice. The King's duty is to "conserve and augment the goods necessary for temporal life, ... [and] to conserve his subjects in peace" (II/9/5).

Although he tells us at one point that his only concern is with the duties of subjects and that he will not discuss the duties of sovereigns or the difference between the use and the abuse of the right to command, Malebranche in fact turns to the duties of sovereigns and what is meant by the abuse of command, including which circumstances justify disobedience. First, if one's opposition to a law or order is only private, we are to stifle that opposition and obey – for we cannot set ourselves up as criteria of legality in that way. The result would be anarchy. But this is when nothing is commanded of us against God or the

church. But what if the case is not clear? How do I decide whether a secular prince's law or command violates Reason and God's laws, in a hard case? This, in fact, is the question of just rebellion, and Malebranche handles it delicately, as we might expect – for on this question may rest not only the decision to resist a law of the state and risk one's life, but on the other side of the coin it also may rest on the sovereign's decision to defend an unjust law or allow rebellion for the sake of the greater good of his reign and his people. Malebranche's response is that when the evidence is not clear, and the laws are obscure, and the state and the church are on opposite sides, we must consider the natural rights of the two bodies, church and state. We must counsel with enlightened people. Finally, if we see ourselves obliged out of obedience to God to disobey a civil power, we must do so in "a spirit of generosity, with all the respect we ought to render" to the civil authority being disobeyed. That is, we honor God in his person because of the office he holds; but the authority must, on his part, also recognize that he will be treated by God as he treats his subjects, and that he ought to be submissive to His law – therefore he ought not to find fault in those who disobey in this way for these reasons, "for men must not be forced to act against their conscience" (II/9/12). When a person is seeking to act according to the light of the mind, and when we cannot all have the same feeling, if we are not sufficiently enlightened at that time to be able to see the issue in the same light, and these people "are not remiss in those duties which are known to them", then the civil authority owes them "compassion and patience" rather than anger or violence. A late-twentieth century reader cannot help but compare this approach to that of Mohandas Gandhi in South Africa and during India's struggle against British colonial rule. In nascent form, the considerations brought to bear, on both sides of the contested issue, are strikingly similar. Whether it is likely that a public official in this situation would consider his own fallibility is another story; the principles seem sound and, of course implicitly if not explicitly, an authority who is oblivious to such counsel, and whose head is filled with "his" authority, is likely to fall or be stricken just for that reason – as we have seen in more than one case.

Turning to the question of legitimate versus illegitimate power, Malebranche considers the distinction between "gold and marble" – such, I am sure, as one would have seen at Versailles – and the legitimate uses of power in safeguarding the health and safety of the people. The showy palace might have some place, in reflecting the awesome task bestowed on the sovereign. More likely to have some legitimacy is the use of force, since none of us finds the governing of our senses, imaginations, and passions to come easily, and the best of us sometimes fails to respond to reason or warnings. So there need to be some people charged with the use of force if needed. Yet these police must not "draw vanity from that right" – it is theirs only by necessity, and only under certain conditions. They are removable "at a nod" if they abuse their power. And, similarly, the superiors of those who use force must exercise a particular duty as Vicars of Reason, to speak for reason and for the rule of law, not only to citizens in general but most directly to their subordinates (II/11/5). Power is

properly used lawfully; direct force is justified only when the other person is acting without reason, and does not want to be subject to reason.

This move is not at all characteristic of Augustinian philosophers; Malebranche moves away from mere legitimation of the police power and toward a Platonic view that the prince is at bottom an educator, someone undertaking to give good reasons for the laws, and to seek accord with the subjects through reasoning rather than the use of force. The sovereign is to be more of a servant of his people than a master of ceremonies. Justice and truth belong not only in the Heavenly City after we leave this life, but also here in time and in our own place, in as much as we can bring our actions to emulate God's Order. The aim of government should be peace and charity; the means should be Reason, "which all men glorify as to-be-followed, even when they themselves are far from it" (II/11/6). It is not enough for the sovereign to be the preserver of the peace; he must seek justice in earthly politics. Unlike St. Augustine, Malebranche does not distinguish between justice in the Heavenly City and concord for the earthly life. He does not accept a bifurcation of power from reason: "Men regard Reason as powerless and actionless, incapable of rewarding those attached to its course, or of punishing those who follow the contrary course. Men must be delivered of this error, [even though] it is confirmed by all the prejudices of the senses, and they must be made to feel vividly, by its conduct concerning them, that there are not two different divinities, Reason and power; that the Omnipotent is essentially Reason, and that universal Reason is omnipotent .... Those who are powerful and reasonable are permitted to use force to oblige unreasonable persons to fear a Reason they will not love – but they should use Reason to lead those who love it and to unite it to power ..." (II/11/9). Malebranche concludes his discussion of political duties by emphasizing the role of political authorities as teachers, whose reasoned use of power both governs and persuades. For not only should people be excited, as they can be by a show of office or power, but also they should at the same time be enlightened as to how and why such authority establishes laws for certain purposes. We need to accept the motives of our leaders, as well as their holding the empowered positions they hold; and this is accomplished by Reason, not mere force.

Turning, finally, to our duties to ourselves, Malebranche notes that "we cannot cease from loving ourselves. But we can cease from loving ourselves badly" (II/14/3). Our general duty to ourselves is to work for our happiness and perfection, as well as we can. By perfection he means, not what we might mean as 'making myself perfect', but closer to what Aristotle means by human well-being, that is, making ourselves come to be as fully as we are able to do, given our talents and the time we have. We are simply born with self-love, it is "natural and necessary". It is the natural motivation to want to be happy, and to love the good in general, and attach our capacity to love to those things we take to be good at the time. In doing this, however, we can love well or badly, so that not only our relationships to God, other people, and our political leaders or authorities might go well or badly but also, most particularly here, our making

of our own lives is being done well or poorly. We cannot help the fact that we act, that our acts become habits, and that we come to be what we habitually do, to be known and to know ourselves in terms of our dominant habits that combine to make us be who we are at the time. Thus Malebranche introduces [1] the idea of 'enlightened self-love' to distinguish loving well, from [2] unenlightened self-love, which refers to loving oneself badly, and [3] self-love pure and simple, which is our condition at birth, our natural tendency to love the good in general. The things we do naturally do not involve conscious action or choice, and so have nothing to do with merit or esteem – they are not accomplishments. But it is an accomplishment to be modest, to place oneself only in that position which is no more and no less than one deserves, to attribute to oneself what is actually there, and to will to be only as happy as one deserves to be at the time. It is an accomplishment to seek justice for oneself, knowing that may be a two-sided coin. At the heart of this concern with self-knowledge and its relationship to enlightened self-love is the fact that while we cannot avoid being happy when things are going well for us, we can and, indeed, we are the only ones who can control how we love and choose. The ability to love and choose well can be acquired only through the strength and freedom of the mind, in light of reflection on virtue and duties, working continually and as well as we are able to do. This is the work of seeking what Malebranche calls our "perfection" or what we might refer to as a whole and active, functioning life within our own limits. A free and reasoned loving, here, plays the same role in Malebranche's ethics as does the moral excellence of "deliberate desire" in Aristotle's.

It might seem odd to refer to this discussion as a "duty" to ourselves since we may very well want to undertake this course of action for its own sake whether it were a duty or not. But Malebranche calls it a duty because we are embedded, so to speak, in a system of relationships to other people, other beings, to institutions, and to God, and within ourselves we have a complex of relationships among our physical abilities, our senses, imagination, passions, talents, errors, weaknesses, hopes, and limitations. Relationships entail duties because, in a manner of speaking, Malebranche's whole system is "alive", it is dynamic such that not only oneself, but other people and God also are counting on us, or have need of us, just as we count on them or have need of them. It is not inappropriate, then, to speak of one's possible growth and development as an obligation as well as a fulfillment; in Malebranche's system of philosophy, particularly in his moral philosophy, it is both.

VI. THE INFLUENCE OF MALEBRANCHE'S *ETHICS* ON SOME LATER PHILOSOPHERS

As mentioned in Section I above, Malebranche's influence during his lifetime was extensive; a complete investigation of this issue should become a more workable task now that the Easton, Lennon, and Sebba *Bibliographia*

Malebranchiana has appeared.[16] Briefly, some highlights can be noted here: A group of younger thinkers came to call themselves "Malebranchistes" at the re-chartering of the French Royal Academy of Sciences in 1699, following his lead in some of the investigations mentioned in Section I above, such as the calculus, the communication of motion, embryology, church reform, and moral philosophy. Their work, and that of the French Malebranchistes who followed them during the early and middle years of the eighteenth century, has been detailed by Bouillier, Delbos, Robinet, and Wade, among others.[17] One area of his influence that is only beginning to receive attention is the thesis – which first gained him the notoriety of being placed on the Index when his 1680 *Treatise on Nature and Grace* was banned in 1689[18] – that God created and sustains the world not only by general physical laws intelligible in principle, but that He also works by general moral and spiritual "laws of grace", such that not only might natural sciences be undertaken to understand the former, but moral sciences might be undertaken to understand the latter (of which his *Ethics* is the most concentrated fruit).[19]

Pierre Bayle saw to it that Malebranche's works were reviewed and thus brought to the attention of the learned world by way of what was, at that time, the first international philosophical periodical, the *Nouvelles de la république des lettres*. Malebranche began correspondence with G. W. F. Leibniz in the 1680's, and it continued almost until their deaths (Malebranche's in 1715, Leibniz's in 1716). They responded to each other's work, shared a vigorous correspondence, revised their ideas in response to each other's questions, and though neither ever came to see the problem of the energy or causal power of concrete individuals in the other's way, each was provoked to refine his thought because of difficulties raised by the other.[20]

As early as 1693, before the *Search after Truth* was translated into English (in 1694 and 1695 – by Thomas Taylor and again by Richard Sault), John Locke began work on what became a two-volume "examination" of Malebranche's *Search* in order to criticize Malebranche's arguments and explain, at least to himself (since he did not publish the work during his lifetime), what he could and could not accept.[21] Locke's masterpiece, *An Essay Concerning the Human Understanding* of 1690 may have included some of the fruits of this encounter. Though such influence might seem negative, the process is vital to original philosophical work from Plato to the present – philosophers address themselves to what they understand to be the most noteworthy prevailing analyses of the issues which concern them, and develop their own insights by analyzing their contemporaries and predecessors, and in that activity begin to spell out where and why they agree or disagree. Locke rejected most of what he found in the *Search* – but his eventual positions concerning our idea of "power" in his Book II, Chap. 21 of his *Essay*, and his eventual account of what is wrong with our everyday idea of causality or "necessary connexion", would not have come out as they did, had he not studied Malebranche carefully.[22]

Charles McCracken gives a carefully-detailed study of Malebranche's

influence on some other British thinkers in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[23] McCracken researched those contemporaries of Locke known as the Cambridge Platonists including Ralph Cudworth and his like-minded thinkers. One of these was Thomas Taylor who translated Malebranche; there was a number of others who also considered themselves English Malebranchists, such as John Norris (and, for all we know, perhaps James Shipton, who translated the *Treatise on Ethics* in 1695).

Luce has explored Malebranche's influence on Bishop Berkeley and (mentioned earlier) Berkeley's college notebook or *Commonplace Book* served as a beginning for his own eventual constructive work, not negatively as with Locke but more approving and sympathetic, noting arguments and technical terms, wrestling with their meaning and undertaking to make his own approach to the issues raised.[24]

Malebranche's influence on Scottish thought has received considerable attention. In his 1728 *Essay on the Passions and Affections*, Frances Hutcheson refers to Malebranche's works six times, four of them concerning the passions and how to distinguish them from inner feeling or "affections"; however, Hutcheson cites only the *Search after Truth*, not the *Treatise on Ethics*. No thorough study of Malebranche and Hutcheson has been undertaken, to my knowledge – but their common ground in focusing philosophical attention on the study of feeling, moral psychology, or the theory of emotion and how that work enables us to develop a theory of moral judgment, establishes the first bridge between Malebranche's work and that of what came to be known as the 'Scottish common sense' school of moral philosophy. Only barely touched is the question of influence of Malebranche on the Perthshire Scottish nobleman, Lord Alexander Forbes of Pitsligo, whose 1734 volume of *Essays* includes a careful examination of the controversy concerning Mandeville's position on self-love in *A Fable of the Bees*, and how it is differentiated from "enlightened self-love" – a major concept in Malebranche's work, as we have seen.[25]

The most carefully explored influence of Malebranche and Scottish thought is, of course, his influence on David Hume, who not only cites Malebranche among the few thinkers to whom he owes a debt, but also either borrows or refutes particular Malebranchian arguments in his 1738–40 *Treatise on Human Nature*, his 1748 *An Enquiry Concerning the Human Understanding*, and his 1751 *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. Particular issues noted by scholars have been Hume's consideration of Malebranche on causality and our idea of "necessary connexion", his consequent theory of "occasional" causes and "seeing" ideas in God, his argument as to why we have not, and cannot have an *a priori* clear and distinct idea of ourselves, and his treatment of intelligible extension and of our idea of space.[26] Less well-known are Hume's reflections on what Malebranche meant by "the strength of the mind" and "the freedom of the mind", and how Hume responded to, or modified and appropriated these concepts. Areas still in need of exploration are the relationships between Malebranche's understanding of why and how ethics is an experimental science, and how Hume understood that same science, and Malebranche's

contributions to Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, and Adam Smith in what the latter called his "theory of moral sentiments". Underlying these questions is the undertaking, contrary to Descartes as well as subsequent continental and British rationalists, to lay the groundwork for the historical and empirical study of how we feel, wisely or badly, in order to enable us more critically to evaluate felt, lived experience.[27]

One final note concerning the influence of Malebranche brings us to the American colonies before the revolution against Britain in 1776. Herbert and Carol Schneider edited the works of the American philosopher Samuel Johnson who expresses some debt to Malebranche and who became the first president of King's College (later Columbia University).[28] In addition, the question of Malebranche's influence on Jonathan Edwards requires further exploration. In 1754, Edwards published his *A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the modern prevailing notions of that Freedom of the Will, which is supposed to be essential to Moral Agency, Vertue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame*,[29] in order to challenge what he saw as the two extreme positions about moral agency then current – the Arminian that we have a strict freedom of the will such that a free act has no antecedents, and the mechanist and also Calvinist view that we have no freedom at all, being entirely determined by God's divine plan for the universe. Edwards has long been read as a sort of Lockean, because of his intense interest in the experience of feeling, the analysis of which is his foundation for moral evaluation and choice. Yet of course this was Malebranche's undertaking prior to Locke, and particularly in moral philosophy. More directly, Malebranche's ideas can be seen in several places – for example, Edwards's view that 'cause' is to be understood properly as an "occasion" (edition cited, p. 181); that to suspend consent is itself an act (210); how an act of willing fulfills a duty (312); the analysis of moral agency and the formation of character (338); the terminological problem in passing from words for external actions to those for internal actions (341; cf. Malebranche's treatment of this issue in the 1712 edition of the *Search*); the analysis of actions and passions not as 'different existences' but as occurrences characterized by different kinds of relations (347); and the view that we have no *a priori* idea of our soul or self (376). This is not to suggest that Edwards is "a Malebranchist" in any simple sense, but that directly or indirectly, of all the works in ethics of the century before Edwards' own tome, Malebranche's is one of the closest in its causal analysis, its emphasis on the factors in moral choice and some of the technical details vital to the argument; further work will be required before this question can be sufficiently clarified.

VII. APPRECIATION AND ASSESSMENT OF MALEBRANCHE'S SIGNIFICANCE

Recently our society has begun to turn attention back to the neglected study of ethics – whether because of our perceptions of a wider and deeper extent of lying, deception, betrayal of trust, corruption of office and violence to self or

others, or for some other reasons. Many have noted that perhaps just because of the increasingly global quality of our lives, and the effects of so many varieties of moral perception impinging on us and our various cultures, the lack of a shared moral culture becomes intensely apparent. Cultural relativism is still maintained, at least at popular levels of discussion, and the issues of nihilism vs. shareable moral principles are receiving renewed analysis and initiative. With what terms, with which principles might we undertake to share our problems or interpret those of others? If our moral idioms pass each other like darkened ships in the night, we neither hear nor make ourselves heard. And the consequences of these silences are not simply increased isolation, but often heightened feelings of anger, cynicism, despair, powerlessness, fear, or self-righteousness – all dysfunctional attitudes in regard to the problems themselves.

Recent work in ethics has begun to reflect on the dominance of Kantian or Utilitarian paradigms, to critique their strengths and weaknesses and in that light to reconsider the classical Greek ethical paradigm in which the development of moral character, the concern with certain foundational strengths or virtues, and the centrality of individual judgment and responsibility are seen to be foundational to the wider questions of public good, duties to others, the environment, and to God.[30]

From these reflections, some moral philosophers are turning attention to the task of developing a common moral idiom.[31] Whether that can be done, and whether or how people of differing backgrounds could come to discuss moral problems in the same foreground language, will have to be a high priority in the coming century. The scholar might contribute to this task by work in the history of ethics – a barely charted wild of considerable variety and only a few well-known points of orientation. Yet there is only a handful of works of stature in this field which undertake to range from Biblical and ancient Greek and Oriental times to the present.[32] Most western philosophers would consider Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* to be the founding document in systematizing the field, though several of Plato's works are irreplaceable in key areas, such as *Gorgias* on hedonism and 'might makes right'; *Republic* on moral education, the problem of justice in the soul and in the community, and the causes of decay; and *Symposium* on the maturation of loving. Without undertaking even a sketch of that history, and without implying omission of Confucius's *Analects* or the Buddha's "Noble Eight-fold Path" as primary sources in this history, one can still say that the task of presenting a global history of ethics is in principle manageable, and that such a history would both suggest the serious differences and the deepest common elements of those works produced in the brief time humans have spent, thus far, reflecting on human moral character, judgment, and choice.

It is in this light that Malebranche's *Ethics* needs to be read – for it is one of the strongest cases I have seen of a neglected masterpiece. It is a systematic ethics written at the peak of the 'century of genius', based on an ontology but readable on its own, opening with the study of virtue and devoted in its second half to duty almost as if our current concern to co-relate Aristotle with Kant, –

the virtues of character with those of duty, the art of judgment in particular cases with the universality of fairness toward all like cases, – were already beginning to come together in Malebranche's mind in 1684. In his treatment of the senses, imagination, and passions, while quaint and arcane as to its neurological details, Malebranche still does raise up the task, and attempt to integrate an analysis of, physiology and neurology with the problem of how to found moral judgments well; in fact Malebranche may be unique in the history of ethics in doing so. His proposal of two virtues vital to the overall task of becoming virtuous – namely what he called "the strength of the mind" and, then, "the freedom of the mind" – themselves come to influence others (such as David Hume) and today merit our close attention, situated as they are between physiology and sound moral judgment.

Deriving all duties from modelling ourselves in imitation of God, thereby seeing our duties as modelled after the duties of the three persons of the Trinity to each other, Malebranche carefully, even eloquently and often sensitively distinguishes among competing, even compelling duties – though his preferred idiom would not win a wide audience today. But his work on personal, interpersonal, and political duties deserves further attention for its logic of social bonds and how to sustain them. He worked at clarifying how and when it is necessary to defer to the needs of society, and how we can 'render unto Caesar', or to others, as needed without at the same time adopting a double ethic or confusing performance of those duties with virtue, moral character, and our duties, in conscience, to ourselves.

Yet this work, so rich in insight and philosophical constructs designed for founding an experimental science of ethics, has been virtually neglected for three centuries.[33] The first-time reader will easily see why. Even though Malebranche undertakes to reason clearly and persuasively, and has been praised by many, even unsympathetic readers for the beauty of his style of writing, he often uses the vocabulary of late seventeenth century Catholic Oratorian theology. In the manner of Christian writers of his time, of course, he cites scripture wherever it seems appropriate; but he also uses Catholic theological concepts for some of his technical terms. For today's readers who are outside his church, this practice can make for rough sledding, at best; for some, no doubt, it simply categorizes his work as a narrow, sectarian tract of no interest any longer. Since it was written at the height of the Counter-Reformation, by a member of that movement's leading French institute for advanced studies, and since it echoes Pascal's *Provincial Letters* and *Pensées* in its apologia of the reasonableness of the Catholic Church and of personal commitment to Jesus Christ as its Head, – all the while footnoting quarrels within that Church and apparently viewing all non-Catholics as pagans, – we have no trouble understanding why three centuries of readers, or perhaps simply potential readers, would set the book down without finishing it. It might well seem to be a minor polemic in a century over-loaded with them.

But there is a reason, mentioned earlier, and in Malebranche's first chapter, as to why we might do well to make the effort to disregard what is dated and

read anyway. In the three thousand years of man's recorded reflections on the moral life, we are not overly endowed with careful, systematic philosophical works of a high order of conceptual and architectonic quality. Few works in ethical theory have the potentially global value, the wealth of hypotheses and philosophical constructs one would expect to find in order to consider such a work as truly discussable. We cannot, it seems to me, insist that morally and intellectually serious work of a high calibre must come to "us" in "our" own idiom, or be left on the shelf; we need to widen and deepen our own tolerances for idioms not already our own, both to study what there is of merit in the short history of ethics, and to go on from there to live in a time we already know will contain more, if not more clashing idioms of moral discourse than have ever been heard before. Malebranche's *Ethics* is one such potentially-discussable work, and he meant it as such, arguing that the "Reason" that enlightens all minds is one and the same, however local may be our languages and customs. One can not help but suggest that he may well have seen the reflexivity of that observation: his own idiom, too, is not so vital to the issues before us, as is the possible merit of the contribution he offers by way of the idiom of his (now odd-sounding) late seventeenth century French Catholic moral theology. Just as, in attending a play, we experience a 'willing suspension of disbelief', in order to pretend this staged drama is really happening, so too in this time of moral babel, it seems to be good philosophical sense for us willingly to suspend the unbelief we feel at first exposure to archaic or sectarian ways of talking, and pretend that there may be real thinking going on here anyway, and that we shall at least for awhile, 'go along' with the effort, in order to see how it comes out. With that attitude, I suspect, the philosophers of any generation may become able to hear and discuss across what now seem to be such huge differences of idiom as to permit only isolation and silence. This is a delicate issue – it may seem condescending to suggest that one has understood part of a work without believing in the theological underpinnings on which its author built it. Yet, Malebranche himself, I suspect, would reply that all minds are enlightened by the same Reason, whatever their idiom; he undertook to speak both in his own idiom and also in a way which would be accessible to anyone. For many of us this means focussing on the more accessible language instead of the more sectarian.

Of course there are philosophical problems still waiting for the willing and attentive reader. I conclude by mentioning four of them – (a) occasionalism, (b) the empirical method of evaluating feelings, (c) Malebranche's experimental idealism, and (d) his treatment of duty.

(A.) As Schrecker, Robinet, Gueroult, and I have argued earlier,[34] Malebranche's occasionalism is a sort of combinatory of parallelisms, not entirely unlike Spinoza (who had two attributes, extension and thought, in infinite parallel) except more complex. It encompasses five sorts of parallels in his ontology – the four most affecting his ethics being those between the mind and the body, bodies and other bodies, minds and other minds, and minds and "Jesus Christ as-man", meaning the system of the feeling of worth attached to

every experience we have. The merit of occasionalism is twofold – it agrees with skepticism about the prevailing theory of knowledge, that what we know are Aristotelian-Scholastic forms "informing" our minds, and it places the problem of matching experience to our conceptions in the realm of time, space, and experience rather than an *a priori* intellectual "faculty". In effect, it sets up the conceptual framework, by what Malebranche called "supposition",[35] which is intended to enable us to structure these match-ups without claiming that either my understanding of a thing, or the thing itself, is the "copy" of the other – each is what it is in its way, but has a parallel ontologically and thus experientially. This approach avoids reductionism, the perpetually-over-the-horizon hope of what we might call physicalists, who would maintain that sooner or later such apparently non-physical experiences as loving, merit, blame, responsibility, humor, poor taste, and so forth, will be explained entirely and only neurologically. Though this is not the place to argue it, my own hunch is that a fairly pluralistic theory of being, which undertakes to account for a variety of ways of being instead of a variety reducing to one way of being, will turn out to make more philosophical sense and to be more scientifically fruitful – both in the natural sciences and in the human or moral sciences. But Malebranche is not the last word, on this; indeed, our own time is not the best in which to look for a systematic philosopher to undertake to integrate the best that is known in today's natural, social, and human or moral sciences into a sufficiently rich and inclusive theory of being without Procrustean sacrifices.[36] The strength of occasionalism is that its lattice-work of relationships quantitative and qualitative, infinite in God's mind and most of it only knowable to us historically or empirically, is that it provides a complex and, literally, timely account of analysis of events open to as many variables as may be, without the handicaps of the substance-ontology and "necessary connections" it endeavors to avoid. It is not as amenable to modern scientific usage as is Hobbes's "first philosophy",[37] but its provision for multi-variant analysis still deserves consideration, if one can only 'break the code' of Malebranche's idiom.

(B.) Malebranche's empirical method for evaluating feelings is both highly suggestive and would, still, benefit from clarification. One might reply to his argument that even careful reflection on some experiences does not yield results as to the felt merit or perfection of the thing in question. Malebranche may be the first "axiologist" in the manner of Nicolai Hartmann. He is clear that every thing has some perfection or value of its own, at least in being what it is rather than nothingness – and that that value has a place in the overall Order of all that there is, such that we are, in principle, able to discover it by way of either the light of the mind or the warmth of inner feeling. It seems to me a solid contribution to explain how our nervous system works and how semi-automatic reactions can come into play, what they are for, why they are and are called passions rather than actions. We do indeed seem to have some natural feeling for ourselves, for how we are doing, for the difference between health and illness, physically and mentally, so that Malebranche's work begins to provide for sorting out these experiences as legitimate subject-matter rather than merely

regrettable animal reflexes unworthy of the attention of morally serious philosophers. It is ironic that he is classified as a rationalist, for in ethics he is nothing of the kind, being, in fact, closer to Aristotle than to Samuel Clarke or Kant on this topic. But it still seems fair to add that his account of what "incontestable experiences" are, and how they are, and how they work to guide our feeling and our reflection toward well-justified moral choices, needs further elaboration and critical response if it is to be made to work. Yet, too, I hasten to add that there are very few philosophers who come close to trying – John MacMurray's *Reason and Emotion* comes to mind.

(C.) By "experimental idealism" I mean to note that like Plato and unlike what is called "Platonism", Malebranche does argue that the truth or the good of a thing cannot be found in, or derived from sensory perception by any system of filtrations, but his own account of how and why the senses, imagination, passions, memory, and eventual conceptualization tie up in one theory of knowledge is experimental and corrigible as to details while retaining its (to me, correctly) Platonic character. This issue has not yet been resolved; some hard-headed investigators, *esprits géométriques*, readily dispense with systems whether by Plato, Malebranche or whomever, in favor of a minimum of theoretical constructs always themselves under review for possible disposal (if they cease to carry their own weight in the field of inquiry they should serve). Some others, *esprits de finesse*, find suggestive and heuristically fruitful possibilities in inherently plural or combinatory, complex systems that offer some overall unity or general theory of interrelationships. Even at the practical level, not all able investigators share the same predilection on this issue. But like the unified complexity of baroque music, Malebranche's experimental idealism seems to me to undertake to keep within one larger view the multiplicity of beings and processes, and the contrapuntal quality of interrelationships which a wide curiosity continually finds – and which stimulates new approaches to persistent questions.

(D.) Malebranche's treatment of duty deserves some note: long before Kant, he argued that the simple fact of a human person having come into this life is sufficient reason to accord respect to that person, whether he is a criminal, a fool, or more socially 'respectable'. Duties are seen to override personal estimation in a wide range of cases, from those to our "equals" to our secular authorities to family life to our selves. Malebranche does not justify this position on *a priori* grounds of pure practical reason setting universal or law-like requirements of the maxim of one's action, as did Kant, and he does not divorce our fulfilling our duties from the long-run question of our possible happiness or well-being. Rather, he coordinates one's virtue or development of moral character with one's obligations without sacrificing or debasing either; he does not, with Kant, strip our natural being of any authentic and felt moral worth, but he does not, with Aristotle, leave unexamined the problem of how to sustain moral bonds needed for the sake of society 'whether the other person deserves it or not' (so to speak). Our duties are grounded in kinds of relationships we encounter in society – and they are distinguished from judgments we

make about the respect, esteem or friendship we choose to give to another person. But they are not fulfilled merely or solely by intent, as with Kant. They must be shown, enacted. Again, here, it seems to me, the topic of the relationship between the ethics of character and the ethics of duty, as we pursue it in the near future, would do well to consider how and why Malebranche works out these questions as he does.

Malebranche's moral psychology resembles that of Plato and Aristotle, as well as the debt already mentioned to the Trinitarian psychology of St. Augustine. Like the Greeks, he does not posit a "faculty" of "the will" but simply the natural fact that we seek what seems to us to be good, and endeavor to be happy, as well as we can. He adopts Plato's three-part soul, in which EROS or the daimon or spirit of a person strives both upwardly for insight and illumination, and then downwardly to practicalities in order to "procreate" by doing something both motivated and, now, given structure or plan by that now-informed love. With Aristotle, he focusses on acts, habits, the formation of character, the distinction between moral excellence and one well-done action, and the problem of how to transform desire into deliberate desire by a process of deliberation. Unlike St. Augustine, he does not express revulsion at his body, or bodily feeling, passions, and functions. To the contrary, he criticized asceticism as an abuse of the body as an "earthly temple", and considered our physical needs and passions to have legitimate employment both for the sake of our own physical conservation, and for the sake of the continuation of society. Unlike St. Augustine he rejects one ethic for secular life and another for the spiritual, arguing that God is as imminent as He is transcendent, that our eternal souls have work to do here and now rather than waiting for another life; he even dared to touch the normally-forbidden topic of whether or not a citizen possesses any "right of rebellion", and concluded that we do, when required by a reasoning conscience which respects the legitimate functions of authority. However the reader may estimate his overall accomplishment, it is apparent that Malebranche undertakes both a long-range vision of history and society, seeing the entire scope of human life from one angle, and then undertakes a minute examination of how we sense, imagine, form feedback loops which give us instantaneous responses, and, in addition, experience feelings not physiological or neural but having to do with the accomplishment as well as the simple being of another person or object, or of ourselves. This is not the Malebranche known to the readers of the *Search after Truth*, seemingly preoccupied with Descartes and "clear and distinct ideas", but it is a Malebranche challenging in his reach and often both eloquent and careful in his detail of exposition. Despite the difficulty most of us face in reaching across nearly three centuries and at least out of our own idiom into his, the labor of attention brings the reward of serious philosophical provocation, and the potential for critical and constructive work to follow.

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4 August 1991

NOTES

1. See *Malebranche et Leibniz. Relations personelles.* Ed. André Robinet (Paris: Vrin, 1955).
2. André Robinet has devoted an entire volume to the subject of Malebranche's scientific work and his interaction with the other members of the Academy. The Academy was founded and chartered in 1666; Malebranche was named as one of its members two days after it was given a new charter and rules of organization by Louis XIV in January of 1699. See *Malebranche de l'Académie des sciences. L'oeuvre scientifique, 1674–1715* (Paris: Vrin, 1970), pg. 7.
3. See appendix to my *De la Recherche du Bien: A Study of Malebranche's Science of Ethics.* International Archives of the History of Ideas, No. 48 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972).
4. The work is titled, "An Examination of Pere Malebranche's Opinion Of Seeing All Things in God". It is listed as manuscript #17 in the Bodleian Library, with the date "1693"; it was first published posthumously in *Posthumous Works of Mr. John Locke* (London: J. Churchill, 1706), and can be found in vol. IX of the twelfth edition of *The Works of John Locke* (London, 1824).
5. See François Bouillier, *Histoire de la philosophie cartésienne* (Paris, 1854), Vol. I, Ch. XVII through XX. Also, for more recent discussion of the Malebranchistes in the Oratory and in the Academy of Sciences, see *Malebranche vivant. Biographie – Bibliographie*, ed. André Robinet, t. XX of *Oeuvres complètes de Malebranche* (Paris: Vrin, 1967), Chap's. III and IV.
6. In English, the only book-length treatment to date is my own *De la recherche du Bien: A Study of Malebranche's Science of Ethics* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972). For a brief discussion, see J. B. Schneewind, *Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant*, Vol. I (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 258–275, which includes brief selections from the *Treatise on ethics* using the 1695 James Shipton translation.
7. The others are, in order: *The Search after Truth. With Clarifications* [1672–'76], translated by Thomas Lennon and Paul Olscamp (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980); *Dialogues on Metaphysics* [1688], transl. Willis Doney (NY: Abaris Books, 1980); and *Dialogue Between a Christian Philosopher and a Chinese Philosopher on the Existence and Nature of God* [1707], transl. Dominick A. Iorio (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1980). There is an earlier translation of the *Dialogues on Metaphysics*, by Morris Ginsberg (London, 1923), though it is less accurate than Doney's translation concerning textual changes made by Malebranche between 1688 and his death. Prof. Patrick Riley is currently preparing a translation of Malebranche's 1680 *Traité de la nature et de la grâce.*
8. See Willis Doney's translation, cited above, and my study of the system in Chapter Two, "Malebranche's Ontology", cited above.
9. An excellent set of lectures tracing the notion of illuminism from St. Augustine to the early reformation pietists into the seventeenth century and then the Enlightenment, is "Five Stories from the History of Enlightened Religion (Illuminism)", presented by Herbert W. Schneider at the Blaisdell Institute in April, 1975. The lectures were published under that title in the *Journal* of the Blaisdell Institute, Vol. XI, Special Issue, 1976 (obtainable from The Blaisdell Institute, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA 91711, U.S.A.).
10. We might, here, consider a parallel from the 1913 Russell and Whitehead *Principia mathematica*, in which the logic of quantification is such that no number of existentially-quantified statements (statements like 'this cat here has characteristics a, b, and c') can ever add up to a universally-quantified statement (such as 'all cats have characteristics a, b, and c').
11. For elaboration on this theme of early modern rejection of scholastic causal and

epistemological theories in favor of more experimentally useful theories, see my "Attacks on 'Cause' and New Theories of Experience, 1555–1748", in *Studies in Early Modern Philosophy*, Vol. III, ed. Stanley Tweyman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

12. As noted in my "Translator's Note", this is the second translation of Malebranche's major work in moral philosophy, the first being done by James Shipton in 1695. I have been unable to dig up any information about Shipton. See Charles McCracken, *op. cit.*, for more detail on the English Malebranchists.
13. The main work to consult on the sceptical crisis from Erasmus to Malebranche's time is that of Richard H. Popkin, *History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).
14. See also my discussion of this process in my study of this treatise, *op. cit.*, chapters V, VI and X.
15. For Malebranche's relationship to Louis XIV, see François Bluche, *Louis XIV*, translation by Mark Greengrass (New York: Franklin Watts, 1990), Chapter 20, and especially pages 392–395. Generally, Louis considered himself well-qualified in theological dispute, entered into it readily, and was more than usually concerned with the progress of the Counter-reformation in France, of which movement the Oratory in general, and Malebranche in particular, were influential participants. Perhaps because of his advisors, such as the Jesuit La Chaize, his confessor, Louis tended to see the Jansenist movement as somewhat subversive, and to see the Oratorians as too close to the Jansenists for comfort. For various reasons Malebranche himself was not directly attacked, his works came to maturity and to the press during the prime of Louis's life and reign, and received his (or, more correctly, his administration's) "privilège" to be printed.
16. Published in the *Journal of the History of Philosophy Monograph Series*, Southern Illinois University Press (Carbondale, IL., 1991).
17. The works of Bouillier, Delbos, and Robinet have been cited above; see also Ira Wade, *Intellectual Origins of the French Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).
18. As mentioned, there is a little-known story of Malebranche's works being banned by his church, and how he responded – attempting both to sustain his obedience to the church's authority and at the same time to defend the "spirit of free inquiry" as a duty owed to God's own Reason. See my Appendix on this issue, in my study of the *Ethics*, cited earlier. Patrick Riley's translation of Malebranche's *Treatise on Nature and Grace* is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press.
19. Here, see Patrick Riley, *The General Will Before Rousseau* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).
20. Again, see the work edited by Robinet and cited in Note 1 above, concerning the substance of their exchanges.
21. See note 4, above.
22. See my "Attacks on 'Cause' and New Theories of Experience, 1555–1748", in *Studies in Early Modern Philosophy*, Vol. III, ed. by Stanley Tweyman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), forthcoming.
23. See his *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, cited above.
24. See Luce's *Malebranche and Berkeley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933).
25. See my paper, "EROS, Light, and Moral Sense: French and Scottish Moral Philosophy in the Enlightenment", delivered at the 1978 meeting of the American Society for 18th c. Studies (available from the author: Craig Walton, Ethics and Policy Studies, University of Nevada-Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV. USA 89154–5049). See also my article on Lord Forbes in *Dictionary of Eighteenth Century British Philosophers*, edited by John Yolton and John Valdimir Price (London: Thoemmes Press, 1992, forthcoming).

26. See McCracken, *op cit.*, pp. 13f., note 21 for some bibliography on Malebranche and Hume; the work of Easton, Lennon, and Sebba, cited above as *Bibliographia Malebranchiana*, provides a more comprehensive and current guide.
27. See my "The Logic of the affections: The moral Epistemologies of Malebranche and Hume", paper read at International Hume Society Conference, Université de Nantes, June 29–July 3, 1992.
28. Their edition was published by the Columbia University Press in 1929 as *Samuel Johnson, President of King's College; His Career and Writings*. See also Prof. Schneider's treatment of "The Platonic Heritage of the New England Puritans", Chap. 1, "The Pietist Theory of Love", Chap. 2, and "Immaterialism", Chap. 3, in his *A History of American Philosophy*, second edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).
29. See the edition by Paul Ramsey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), the first published volume of Yale's project to edit and publish Jonathan Edwards's complete works. In his lengthy introductory essay, Ramsey refers to Malebranche twice, obliquely.
30. See, for example, Robert Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985)*; Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), *Whose Justice? Whose Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990); Allan Gibbard's *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); Nancy Sherman's *The Fabric of Character* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Charles Taylor's *Virtue Ethics* (Interlaken, NY: Linden Books, 1991), Rosemarie Tong's *Ethics and Policy Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986) and Larry May's *The Morality of Groups* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987).
31. See, for example, Alasdair MacIntyre's speech to the National Conference of State Humanities Councils, "How To Be a North American" (Nov. 14, 1987), published by the Federation of State Humanities Councils. MacIntyre is arguing that there exists in the history, literature, and legacy of language of North Americans the foundations both linguistically and literarily for interpreting shared experience in ways potentially analogous, for example, to British or French cultures sharing moral experience and concepts through their own literature and history. He does not argue that any one moral culture should be the model for global discourse, but implies that as moral cultures are cultivated and interpreted, both similarities and differences can emerge in more discussable, and hence for human purposes a more hopeful way than is at present possible. See also Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics after Babel. The Languages of Morals and Their Discontents* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), and Wendell Berry, *Standing By Words* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1988).
32. For example, in his 1754 *Essai sur les moeurs*, Voltaire attempts to consider ancient China and India, Arabic culture, the Biblical period, and all of Europe to his own day. Those ranging from ancient Greek work to the present in Western culture are Henry Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960; first published in London by Macmillan in 1886); Alasdair MacIntyre's *A Short History of Ethics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967; reprinted most recently 1984); and Cavalier, Gouinlock and Sterba's *Ethics in the History of Western Philosophy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).
33. From this point of view it is heartening, and to the student will be enlightening to see Malebranche's ethics occupy a significant place in Jerome Schneewind's *Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant*, in two volumes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990; see pp. 258–272). Schneewind includes an introductory essay, and some fifteen pages of the 1695 Shipton translation.
34. See first, André Robinet, *Système et éxistence dans l'oeuvre de Malebranche* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1965), and Chapter Two, "Malebranche's Ontology", in my study of the *Ethics*

cited earlier; Paul Schrecker's 1938 study is entitled, "Le parallélisme théologico-mathematique chez Malebranche", in *Révue philosophique* CXXV (1938), pp. 215–252; Martial Gueroult's work is titled, *Malebranche*, in three volumes (Paris: Aubier, 1955–59).

35. Concerning Malebranche's concept of ontology as "justified" only insofar as its higher-order concepts and relationships provide fruitful "principles" for development of the particular empirical sciences, see *Entretiens sur la métaphysique et sur la religion*, ed. André Robinet, t. XII–XIII of *Oeuvres complètes de Malebranche* (Paris: Librairie J. Vrin, 1965), VI/sec. I and II.
36. But see Herbert Schneider's *Ways of Being* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962); possibly one might find good reasons to study Malebranche's ontology in the light of contemporary process philosophy, particularly Whitehead's *Process and Reality* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1957; first published in New York in 1929 by Macmillan), and perhaps also Dewey's *Experience and Nature* (New York: Dover Publications, 1958).
37. See *Hobbes's 'Science of Natural Justice'*, edited by Craig Walton and Paul Johnson, "International Archives of the History of Ideas", No. 111 (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987).

PART ONE

On Virtue

Chapter One

Universal reason is the Wisdom of God Himself. By means of it, we all have intercourse with God. Truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, each is the same for all intelligent beings as it is for God Himself. Truth and Order: what they are, and what must be done to avoid error and sin. God is essentially just. He loves His creatures in proportion as they are lovable, as they resemble Him. In order to be happy we must be perfect. Virtue, or man's perfection consists in submission to the immutable Order, never in following the order of nature. The error of some ancient philosophers on this subject, based on their ignorance of the simplicity and immutability of the Divine.

I. The *Reason* which enlightens man is the *Word* or the Wisdom of God Himself. Though every creature is a particular being, the reason which enlightens man's mind is universal.

II. If my own mind were my Reason or my light, then my mind would be the Reason of all intelligent beings. For I am sure that my Reason, or the light which enlightens me, is common to all intelligent beings. No one else is able to feel my *pain*; but any man is able to see the same *Truth* which I contemplate.[1] My *pain* is a modification of my own substance, whereas the *Truth* is a good common to all minds.

III. Thus by means of Reason I have, or I am able to have, some intercourse with God, and with all other intelligent beings, since all minds have the same good, or the same law as I have – *Reason.*

IV. This spiritual intercourse consists *in a participation in that same intelligible substance of the Word from which all minds are able to be nourished.* In contemplating this Divine substance, I may see some part of that which God *thinks*. God sees all *truths*, and I may see some of them. Then, I am able to discover something of what God *wills*; for God wills only according to Order, and Order is not entirely unknown to me. It is certain that God loves things in proportion as they are lovable; and I may discover that there are some things more perfect, more estimable, more movable than others.

V. It is true that I cannot be sure that God has produced something other than His own Being, merely by my contemplating the Word, or consulting Reason. For no creature's existence follows necessarily from the Word. The world is not a necessary emanation from Divinity. God is fully self-sufficient. The idea of

infinitely perfect being may be conceived by itself, but the existence of creatures presupposes free decrees from God, who gives them their being. Thus, insofar as the Word is considered precisely, i.e., as the Word alone, as the universal Reason of minds without containing their existence, by contemplating it we cannot ascertain what God is doing. But, supposing that God acts, I may know something of the way in which He acts and be assured that He does not act haphazardly. For that which governs His way of acting, that which is His inviolable Law, is the *Word, Eternal Wisdom*, the Reason which makes me reasonable and which (to some extent) I may contemplate when I have the desire to do so.

VI. Supposing that man is reasonable, certainly we cannot disagree that he knows something of that which God thinks, and something of the way in which God acts. For by contemplating the intelligible substance of the Word, which alone makes reasonable me and all other intelligent beings, I clearly see the *relations of magnitude* which exist between the intelligible ideas contained therein; and these *relations* are the same eternal *truths* which God sees. For God which exist between the intelligible ideas contained therein; and sees as well as I that 2 and 2 are 4, and that triangles which have the same base and are between the same parallels are equal. I may also discover, at least confusedly, the *relations of perfection* which exist between these same ideas; and these relations are the immutable *Order* which God consults when He acts, the Order which also must govern the esteem and love of all intelligent beings.

VII. From this it is obvious that *Truth, Falsehood, Justice, and Injustice* are real and exist for all intelligent beings; that what is true for man is also true for an angel, and for God Himself. What is injustice or disorder for man is also such for God Himself. This is because all minds, when contemplating the same intelligible substance, necessarily find therein the same relations of *magnitude*, or the same speculative truths. They also discover therein the same practical truths, the same laws, the same order, when they see the relations of *perfection* existing between the intelligible beings contained in this same substance of the Word, the substance which alone is the immediate object of all our knowledge.

VIII. I say, when they see the relations of *perfection* or of *magnitude*, not when they judge them. For only the truth, or real relations, are *seen*, and we must *judge* only what we see. When we judge before *seeing*, or judge more things than we have seen, we err; or at least we judge badly, even if by chance we do not err. For to judge things by chance, or by passion or our own interests is to judge badly, since then we are not judging by evidence and light. We are judging by reference to ourselves, and not by reference to Reason, i.e., according to the laws of universal Reason, the Reason which, I say, is the only authority higher than minds and which therefore is the only authority having the right to pronounce upon the judgments made by minds.

IX. Since man's mind is finite, he does not see all the relations between the objects which he knows. He may therefore err in judging relations he does not see. But, *if he would judge only and precisely what he sees*, which he doubtless is able to do, then even though he has a finite mind, though he be ignorant,

though by nature subject to error, he would never err. For then it would be not so much he, but universal Reason within him which would pronounce the judgments he would make.

X. God is infallible by nature: He cannot be subject to error or sin, for He is light and law unto Himself. Reason is consubstantial with Him. He knows it perfectly, and He loves it invincibly. Being infinite, He discovers all the relations contained in the intelligible substance of the Word, and so cannot evaluate what He does not see. And since He loves Himself invincibly, He cannot help but love and esteem things in proportion as they are lovable and estimable,[2] according to the immutable Order of His own perfections. For beings are more or less perfect in proportion as they participate more or less in the Divine perfections.

XI. Apparently angels and saints never err even though by their nature they are subject to error, because the least attention of the mind clearly presents to them ideas and their relations. They judge only what they see. They follow the light, rather than run on ahead of it. They obey the law, and do not place themselves above it. In them Reason alone judges, with sovereignty and without appeal. But man, such as I find myself to be, errs often because the effort of attention is extremely tiring to him. And even if his effort be strong and arduous, his vision of the objects is usually still blurred, (his ideas still confusedly perceived). Thus, tired and not sufficiently enlightened, man settles for probability, and satisfies himself with enjoying a false good for awhile. But soon he becomes disgusted with it, and begins his searches again, until he is again tired and seduced by something else, for which he again settles temporarily, only feebly to begin his difficult search still later.

XII. Since speculative and practical truths are nothing but *relations of magnitude and of perfection*, it is evident that falsehood is not real. It is true that 2 times 2 is 4, or that 2 times 2 is not 5. This is true because there is a relation of *equality* between 2 times 2 and 4, and one of *inequality* between 2 times 2 and 5. Anyone who sees these relations thereby sees truths, *because these relations are real.*[3] But it is false that 2 times 2 is 5, or that 2 times 2 is not 4, because there is no relation of equality between 2 times 2 and 5, nor any of inequality between 2 times 2 and 4. Anyone who sees, or rather, anyone who believes he sees such relations, sees falsehoods. He sees relations which are not. He believes he sees, but in effect he does not see at all. Truth is intelligible, but falsehood, taken by itself, is absolutely incomprehensible.

XIII. Similarly, it is true that an animal is more estimable than a stone and less so than a man. This is because there is a greater relation of perfection from the animal to the stone than from the stone to the animal. And there is a lesser relation of perfection when comparing an animal to a man than when comparing a man to an animal. Anyone who sees these relations of perfection sees truths which must govern his esteem, and consequently he understands that type of love which is determined by esteem.[4] But anyone who esteems his horse more than his coachman, or who believes that a stone by itself is more estimable than a fly or the very smallest of organisms, does not at all see what he

thinks he sees. It is not universal Reason at all, but his own particular reason which leads him to judge as he does. It is not the love of Order at all, but self-love which leads him to love as he does. What he thinks he sees is neither visible nor intelligible; it is a false and imaginary relation. Anyone who governs his esteem or his love by that relation or others like it, necessarily falls into error and disorder.

XIV. *Truth* and *Order* are real, immutable and necessary relations of magnitude and perfection, and these relations are contained in the substance of the Divine Word. Consequently anyone who sees these relations, sees what God sees. Anyone who governs his love by these relations, follows a law which God invincibly loves. Thus there is a perfect conformity of mind and will between such a man and God. In a word, since he knows and loves what God knows and loves, he resembles God as much as he is capable of doing. And since God invincibly loves Himself, He cannot but love and esteem this, His own image. Since He loves things in proportion as they are lovable, He cannot but prefer that image to all others which by their nature or by corruption are farther from resembling Him.

XV. Man is free, presuming the necessary aids.[5] Concerning Truth, he is able to search for it, in spite of his difficulty in meditating. Concerning Order, he is able to follow it in spite of the forces of concupiscence. He can sacrifice his peace of mind for the sake of Truth, and his pleasures for the sake of Order. But he can also prefer present happiness to his duties, and fall into error and disorderly conduct. He can in a word, earn merit or demerit. For God is just; He loves His creatures in proportion as they are lovable, in proportion as they resemble Him. Therefore He wills that all merit be rewarded and all demerit punished; that whoever has made good use of his freedom and is thereby in part rendered perfect and so resembles God, shall be in part happy as is God, and, on the contrary, etc.

XVI. God alone acts upon creatures; or at least He is able to act within them, and do with them as He pleases.[6] Thus He is able to make minds happy or unhappy: happy by the enjoyment of pleasures, unhappy by the suffering of pains. He is able to communicate His power to them by carrying out their desires, and thereby establish them as occasional causes in order to act through them in a thousand ways. God is also able to humble sinners and subject them to the action of the least of beings. Experience makes this sufficiently known, for because we are all of us sinners, we are dependent upon the actions of sensible objects.

XVII. Thus anyone who works at his own perfection and makes himself to resemble God, works for his own happiness, works for his own dignity. If he does that which in some way depends on him to do, that is, if he earns merit by making himself perfect, God will do that in him which in no way depends on him – He will make him happy. For since God loves beings in proportion as they are lovable, and since the most perfect are the most lovable, the most perfect will be the most powerful, the most happy and the most content. Anyone who constantly consults reason and loves Order, thereby taking part in the

perfection of God, will also take part in His happiness, His glory and His dignity.

XVIII. Man is capable of three things: knowing, loving and feeling – knowing the true good, loving it and enjoying it. To know the good and to love it depend considerably on man himself; but to enjoy it in no way depends on his efforts. However, since God is just, anyone who knows the good and loves it will enjoy it. Being just, God necessarily makes such a man feel the pleasure of enjoyment and thereby makes him happy. And that condition comes to any man who, by laborious application, searches for knowledge of the truth, and who, by making good use of his freedom and by the strength of his courage, conforms himself to the law, the immutable Order, in spite of the forces of concupiscence, all the while enduring pains, scorning pleasures and rendering to Reason the honor of believing His word and of being consoled by His promise. How strange it is – man knows full well that neither enjoying pleasure nor avoiding pain depends directly upon his own desires; on the contrary, he feels that it is his responsibility to think correctly and to love what is good, that the light of truth is spread within him when he wishes it, and that it is his responsibility to love and follow Order (I presume once again the necessary aids, which are not lacking to those who have faith, unless by their own negligence).[7] Man has both these views; yet in spite of them he searches only for pleasure, and neglects the principle of his eternal happiness, which is that his knowledge and love must resemble God's knowledge and love, the knowledge of truth and the love for Order. For, as I have already said, anyone who knows the Truth and loves Order, knows and loves as God knows and loves.

XIX. Here, then, is our chief duty, the one for which God has created us; here is the love which is the virtue of virtues, the universal virtue, the fundamental virtue; here is that virtue which makes us just and perfect, which will one day make us happy. We are rational creatures, therefore our virtue, our perfection is to love Reason, or rather, to love Order. Knowledge of speculative truths, or relations of magnitude, do not govern our duties. It is primarily relations of perfection, or practical truths, which make for our perfection. Let us then apply ourselves to knowing, loving and following Order; let us work for our perfection. As far as our happiness is concerned, let us leave it in God's hands, on Whom alone it depends. God is just: He necessarily rewards virtue. Let us not doubt that we shall receive all the happiness we shall have merited.

XX. It is the obedience we render to Order, our submission to the Divine Law, which is virtue in the complete sense. Submission to nature, to the consequences of the Divine decrees or to the power of God is not really submission at all; it is necessity rather than virtue. We can follow nature and still lead an unregulated life, for now nature herself is unregulated. By contrast, we can resist the action of God without contravening His orders, for often a particular action of God is so much determined by secondary or occasional causes that (in one sense) it no longer conforms to Order. It is true that God does not will except according to Order. But often He acts (in some way) against Order.[8] For since Order requires that, as general cause, God should act

in a uniform and constant way, in consequences of the general laws which He has established, He therefore produces some effects contrary to Order. He forms monsters, and as a Prophet says,[9] He sometimes is used by men for their injustices because of the simplicity of ways by which He executes His designs. Therefore anyone who would pretend to obey God by submitting himself to His power, following and respecting nature, would offend Order and fall into disobedience at every turn.

XXI. If God were to move bodies by particular acts of His will, then it would be a crime to flee in order to avoid the falling ruins of a collapsing house. For, short of being unjust, we cannot refuse to return to God the life He has given us, if He should ask for it. It would be an insult to the wisdom of God to redirect the course of rivers and guide them to places lacking water; we would have to follow nature and quietly do nothing. But, because God acts in consequence of general laws which He has established, we rectify His work without offending His wisdom. We resist His actions without resisting His will, because He does not positively and directly will each deed He does. Of course, He never wills unjust actions, for example, murders, though He moves the arms of those who commit them. And although only God orders rain to fall, everyone is permitted to seek cover when it is raining. For God moves our arms only in consequence of the general laws of soul-body union, laws which He did not establish so that men would kill each other. He makes rain fall only as a necessary consequence of the laws of motion, laws which He has not made in order that everyone should be soaked by rain, but for designs greater and more worthy of His wisdom and goodness. If it rains on men, if it rains in the sea and on the sands, it is because God must not change the uniformity of His conduct simply because consequences either useless or unfortunate should follow therefrom.

XXII. This question of obedience to laws is not the same with God as with men, with the general cause as with particular causes. When we resist the actions of men, we offend them. For since they act only by particular wills, we cannot resist their actions without also resisting their designs. But when we resist God's actions, we do not in the least offend Him, and often we even promote His designs. For since God constantly follows the general laws which He has set for Himself, the combination of effects which are necessary consequences therefrom cannot always be conformed to Order or suited to the execution of the most excellent work. Thus men are permitted to prevent natural effects, not only when they may bring death but even when they bring discomfort in submitting ourselves to the Law of God and in following Order. It is not a question of duty, however, but of necessity for us to submit to His absolute power. By contrast, we are able to know Order by way of our union with the Eternal Word, with universal Reason. Therefore it can be our law, and can lead us. But the Divine Decrees are absolutely unknown to us. Let us not in any way make them into rules for ourselves. Let us leave to the sages of Greece and to the Stoics that chimerical virtue *of following God or nature*. For us, let us consult Reason, let us love and follow Order in all things. To submit ourselves

to the law God invincibly loves and which He inviolably follows, is truly to follow Him.

XXIII. However, it must be noted that even though the order of nature is not precisely a law to us, and though submission to that order is not at all a virtue, still we must often consider it. But even this is always because necessity and immutable Order demand it, and not because the order of nature is an effect of God's power. A man who is being persecuted by, or rather who suffers from the pains of gout, is obliged to suffer with patience and humility, because being a sinner, immutable Order requires that he suffer (and also because of other reasons which need not be mentioned here). But if man were not a sinner, and if Order did not require that he suffer in order to deserve his reward, certainly it would be possible and even obligatory to look to his own comfort and flee every discomfort, no matter how persecuted (if such were possible under this supposition) by the severity of the seasons and the miseries which sin has introduced in the world. But even though he is a sinner, man can take cover when it rains, or when wind blows, thus avoiding the action of a vengeful God, because He wills that man conserve his strength and health, and principally the freedom of his mind, in order to meditate on his duties and search for Truth. Since rain and wind are consequences of the general laws of the order of nature, it is not clearly apparent that God would positively will that we suffer their particular discomforts. It would be an enormous crime to avoid the rain if God had made it to rain expressly to get us wet and thereby punish us, just as eating a fruit was a frightful crime for the first man because of the express prohibition and his formal disobedience. If virtue were to consist simply in living in whatever condition we find ourselves to occupy by consequence of the order of nature, then anyone who is born amidst pleasures and abundance could be virtuous without difficulty. Nature being happily favorable to him, he would follow it with pleasure. However, at present, virtue must be difficult so that later it may be generous and meritorious. Man must sacrifice himself to attain to God. Pleasure is the reward of merit; it cannot be the principle of merit, as I shall show in what follows. In a word, Truth itself teaches us that in order to be perfect, some men must sell their goods and distribute them to the poor, which is to change from their natural status and condition. Therefore perfection or virtue does not consist in following the order of nature, but in submitting ourselves in all things to the immutable and necessary Order, the inviolable law of all intelligent beings and of God Himself.

NOTES

1. See the 1st and 2nd *Christian Meditations*, the [tenth] Clarification (Concerning the Nature of Ideas) in *The Search After Truth*, or the first two *Dialogues on Metaphysics*. [M.]
2. Added in 1697, referring to St. Augustine, *De ordine*, II/32–33.
3. Added in 1707.
4. At I/3/2, M. differentiates between two types of love: (1) love *as union with the object*

of love, and (2) *as wishing for the good of which another person has a need.* Cf. also I/3/8 ff., below. At II/6/6 & 7, M. differentiates between *three* types of love: (1) love *determined by esteem*, which is examined in II/7; (2) love *as respect*; and (3) *love as kindness*, both examined in II/8.

5. See the third discourse of the *Treatise on Nature and Grace* (esp. pt. 10) [M.]
6. See the clarification on the supposed efficacy of secondary causes, in *Search After Truth*, 15th clarif., and also the 5th and 6th *Christian Meditations.* [M.]
7. [Note by M.:] In our times people are so fretful or so fragile that it is not enough just to omit some things. One must also give assurances, and more than once, that he is not saying them. May I be forgiven if I seem to lack confidence in my reader's impartiality?
8. See the 7th and 8th *Christian Meditations.* [M.]
9. *Isaiah* 43:24. [Added in 1697]

Chapter Two

> There is no virtue other than the love of Order. Without this love all virtues are false. We must not confuse duties with virtue. We are able to acquit ourselves of our duties without virtue. It is our failure to consult Reason which accounts for approving or following damnable customs. Faith serves, or leads to Reason; but Reason is the sovereign and universal law of all intelligent beings.

I. The Love for Order is not only the principal of the moral virtues; it is the unique virtue. It is the virtue of virtues, fundamental and universal, the virtue which alone makes virtuous the habits or dispositions of minds. Anyone who gives his goods to the poor either because of vanity or by natural compassion is not in the least liberal, because it is not Reason which guides him, nor is it Order which governs him, but only pride or a mechanical disposition. Officers who voluntarily expose themselves to dangers are not at all brave if it is ambition which animates them; nor are the soldiers if their conduct is due to an abundance of animal spirits or because of ferment in the blood. This seemingly noble ardor is only vanity or the workings of a machine; often only a little wine is required to produce a great deal of this sort of conduct. A man who endures the outrages done to him is often neither moderate nor patient. It is his laziness which makes him immobile, and his ridiculous and stoic boldness which consoles him, and gives him the idea of being above his enemies. It is still only a mechanical disposition, this time a scarcity of animal spirits, coldness of blood or melancholy (and perhaps, above all, some contagious trait of a dominant imagination). So it is with all the virtues – if the love of Order is not their principle, they are false and vain, and altogether unworthy of a reasonable nature which bears the image of God Himself and which, by way of Reason, has intercourse with Him. They derive their origins from the body's dispositions. The Holy Spirit does not shape them at all. And anyone who makes the body's dispositions the object of his desire and the subject of his glory, has a base soul, a petty spirit and a corrupt heart. But no matter what a rebellious imagination might think about it, it is neither base nor servile to submit ourselves to the law of God Himself. Nothing is more just than to conform ourselves to Order. Nothing is greater than to obey God.[1] Nothing is more generous than constantly, faithfully, inviolably to take the part of Reason, not merely when we can follow it with honor, but most of all when circumstances of time and place are such that we cannot follow it except when covered with

shame and confusion. For a man who is taken to be a fool because of following Reason, truly loves it. But a man who follows Order only when he shines in the world's eyes by so doing, looks only for glory. And though he may seem utterly dazzling to men's eyes, he is in abomination before God.

II. I do not know if I err in this, but it seems to me that there are many people who barely know true virtue, and that even those who have written about ethics have not always spoken quite clearly and justly.[2] Certainly all the great names which are given to the virtues and vices evoke confused feelings in the mind rather than clear ideas. But since those feelings affect the soul, whereas abstract ideas, even when clear in themselves, spread light only in attentive minds, men remain almost always quite satisfied with words which flatter the senses and passions but leave the mind in the dark. They imagine that a discourse is all the more solid, the more vividly it strikes the imagination, and they regard as specters or illusions those exact reasonings which disappear as soon as attention weakens. Like children who judge objects by the impressions they make upon their senses, these people imagine that there is more matter in ice than in water, and in gold and heavy, hard metals than in the air which surrounds them almost without making itself felt.

III. Furthermore, that which is familiar does not surprise us in the least. We do not challenge it, or examine it. We always believe that we can easily conceive of what we have frequently said or heard, even though we have never examined it. But the most solid and clear truths arouse distrust when they are new. Thus, an obscure and confused word seems clear, however equivocal it may be, provided that usage authorizes it, whereas a term containing no equivocation seems obscure and dangerous when we have not heard it used by persons for whom we have friendship or esteem. This is the reason why terms in ethics are the most obscure and confused; and yet they are regarded as the most clear because they are the most common. For example, everyone imagines he understands the significance of the terms 'to love,' 'to fear,' 'to honor,' 'charity,' 'humility,' 'generosity,' 'pride,' 'envy,' 'self-love.' And even if we wanted to attach clear ideas to these terms and to all the other names given to virtues and vices, we would have to presuppose a knowledge even greater than we believe we have, and we would also assuredly be taking the most confused and perplexed pathway to the study of ethics. For it will be seen in what follows that in order to define these terms well, we must already clearly understand the principles of this science, and must also be learned in the knowledge of man.

IV. One of the greatest faults we notice in the books of certain philosophers is that they confuse duties with virtue, or they call simple duties 'virtues.' Though there is only one virtue, viz. the love of Order, they make an infinity of virtues out of it.[3] This is especially confusing, and so perplexes this science that it is rather difficult to get a good understanding of what must be done in order to be a perfectly good man.

V. It is obvious that virtue must make virtuous the man who possesses it. Yet a man can acquit himself of his duties, and with ease carry out deeds of humility, generosity and liberality without having any of these virtues. Hence,

the disposition to acquit ourselves of such duties as these is not properly a virtue, if without the love of Order. When we acquit ourselves of our duties, we are virtuous in other men's eyes. When we share part of our goods with a friend, we seem liberal and generous. But a man is not always as he seems. A man who never neglects those outward duties of friendship which Order does not prohibit (it alone being our inviolable law), even though he may sometimes appear to be an unfaithful friend, is a more true and faithful friend, or at least he is more virtuous and lovable than those hot-headed friends who sacrifice their parents, their own lives and their eternal salvation to the passions of their friends.

VI. We must not confuse virtue with duties because of a similarity of terms. For such is the way men err. There are those who imagine themselves to follow virtue, though in fact they only follow their natural inclination to fulfill certain duties. And since it is not Reason which leads them in this, they are actually extremely vicious, though they believe themselves to be Heroes of virtue. Meanwhile, deceived by this same confusion of terms and also by the magnificence of the names for 'virtues,' most people take confidence in themselves, esteem themselves without grounds, and often have a very bad opinion of the most virtuous people. This is because it is impossible for good people to follow what Order prescribes for them for very long without seeming to neglect some essential duty. As it turns out, to be prudent, honest and charitable in the eyes of men, we must sometimes praise vice, or nearly always hold our tongues when we hear it praised. In order to be esteemed generous, we must be prodigal. If we are not rash, we shall rarely pass for valiant men; and if we are not superstitious or credulous, then no matter how pious we may be, we shall doubtless be taken for libertines in the minds of the superstitious or overly-credulous.

VII. It is certain that universal Reason is always the same, that Order is immutable. Yet ethics change from one country to the next, and vary with time. With the Germans, it is a virtue to know how to drink; one can have no dealings with them if one does not get drunk. It is not Reason, but wine which ties communities together, settles arguments and makes contracts. Among the nobility it is considered magnanimous to spill the blood of a person who wrongs them. The duel has long been permitted. As if Reason were not worthy of settling our differences, they were settled by force. People have preferred the law of beasts, or trial by ordeal, to the law of God. We must not imagine that this custom has been popular only among warlike people; it has been nearly universal. And if ecclesiastics have not fought each other due to regard for their social status, they have had brave champions who have represented them, and who have upheld their opinions about their rights by spilling their opponents' blood. They have even imagined that God approved such conduct. Whether differences were settled by a duel or by ordeal, these ecclesiastics have not doubted that God presided at the judgment and gave victory to the one who was in the right. For if we presuppose that God acts by particular volitions, as most people believe, then what impiety it would be to fear that He might favor injustice or that His providence might not extend to all things!

VIII. But without looking for damnable customs in times past, let each of us by the light of Reason judge the customs now observed among us, or rather, let us pay attention to the behavior of those who are established as leaders of others. Doubtless we shall often find that each leader has his particular ethics, his own devotions, his favorite virtue; so that this one speaks only of penitence and mortification, that one esteems only duties of charity, another only study and prayer. But whence comes this diversity, if the Reason of man is always the same? It is doubtless because we cease consulting it, and allow ourselves to be led by our enemy, the imagination. It is because, instead of looking at the immutable Order as our inviolable and natural law, we make up ideas of virtue by shaping them at least in some respects to fit our own inclinations. For there are 'virtues' or rather, duties corresponding to our various humors: brilliant 'virtues' appropriate to lordly and haughty souls, low and humble 'virtues' appropriate to timid and fearful spirits, and soft 'virtues' as it were, which fit the lazy and inactive.

IX. It is true that we remain largely in agreement with the view that Order is the inviolable law of minds, and that nothing is governed which does not conform to it. But we too frequently maintain that minds are incapable of consulting this law, and though it is engraved upon our hearts, though we need only go back into ourselves to be instructed by it, we still think, as do the gross and sensual Jews, that it is as difficult to find it as to climb to the heavens or descend to the fires below, as Scripture says.[4]

X. However, I admit that immutable Order is not easy to reach; it dwells within us, but we are always spreading ourselves out to the world around us. Our senses spread our soul out to all parts of the body, and our imagination and passions spread it out to all the objects around us, often even to a world having no more reality than imaginary spaces; this is incontestable. But we must try to silence the senses, imagination and passions, and not to imagine that we could be reasonable without consulting Reason. Order, which must reform us, is a form too abstract to serve as a model for the more gross minds. I grant this. Then let it be given a body; let it be made sensible; clothe it in a variety of ways to make it lovable to sensual man; let it be incarnated, so to speak, but let it always be recognizable. Let us accustom men to distinguishing true virtue from vice, from apparent virtues, from simple duties, of which we may often acquit ourselves without any virtue at all. And let us not set before men phantoms and idols which attract their admiration and respect due to the sensible and majestic pomp surrounding them. For in the long run, if Reason does not lead us, if the love of Order does not animate us, then no matter how faithful we might be to our duties, we shall never be solidly virtuous.

XI. But, some will say, Reason is corrupted: it is subject to error, it must be submissive to faith. Philosophy is only a servant. We must beware its lights; they are perpetually equivocal. Man is not the source of Reason; he is not a light unto himself. Religion is the true philosophy. I admit that Reason is not the philosophy of the pagans, nor of those speakers who say what they do not conceive, who speak to others before the Truth has spoken to them. The Reason

of which I speak is infallible, immutable, incorruptible. It must always be our teacher; God Himself follows it. In a word, we must never close our eyes to the light, but instead we must become accustomed to distinguishing it from the darkness or from false glimmerings, confused feelings, or sensible ideas which seem to be bright and shining lights to those not accustomed to distinguishing the true from the probable, evidence from instinct, Reason from its enemy, imagination. Evidence, or understanding is preferable to faith. For faith will pass away, but understanding will endure eternally.[5] Faith is truly a great good, but this is because it leads us to an understanding of certain necessary and essential truths, without which we can acquire neither solid virtue nor eternal felicity. However, faith without understanding (I am not speaking of the mysteries here, for we cannot have a clear idea of them) – faith, I say, without any light (if that is possible) cannot make us solidly virtuous. It is the light which perfects the mind and governs the heart. If faith could not enlighten men and lead them to some understanding of truth and some knowledge of their duties, assuredly it would have the effects attributed to it. But 'faith' is as equivocal a term as are 'Reason,' 'philosophy,' or 'humane science'.

XII. Thus I continue to agree [with the Church's teaching] that those who do not have enough inner light for guiding their own behavior can still acquire virtue as well as those who best know how to go back into themselves, consult Reason and contemplate the beauty of Order. This is because the grace of feeling or prevenient delight may make up for the lack of light and bind us strongly to our duty.[6] But first of all, I maintain that, other things being equal, whoever goes back into himself most deeply, and who listens to the inner truth in the greatest silence of the senses, imagination and passions, is most solidly virtuous. And in the second place, I maintain that a love for Order which has as its principle more of Reason than of faith – I mean more of light than of feeling, – is more solid, more meritorious and more estimable than another love otherwise equal to it. For at bottom the true good of the spirit should be loved according to Reason, and not at all by the instinct of pleasure. But the condition to which sin has reduced us makes the grace of delight necessary in order to counterbalance the continuous efforts of our concupiscence. Finally, I maintain that for anyone who would never go back into himself – I say never – his pretending to have faith would be entirely useless to him. For the Word became sensible and visible only in order to make the Truth intelligible.[7] Reason only incarnated Itself in order to lead men to Reason by way of their senses; and anyone who would do and suffer the same things Jesus Christ did and suffered would be neither reasonable nor Christian if he did not do it in the spirit of Jesus Christ, the spirit of Order and Reason. But that need never be feared – it is absolutely impossible that any man could really be so separated from Reason that he could never go back into himself to consult it. For, though ever so many people might, perhaps, know nothing at all about going back into themselves, it is not possible that they do not do it, that they do not sometimes listen to the voice of truth in spite of the continuous noises of their senses and passions. It is not possible that they do not have some idea of, and some love for Order, which

they can have only because it most certainly does dwell within them and makes them just and reasonable, at least to some extent. For no man is the principle of his own law, nor is he the spirit which inspires, animates and leads it.

XIII. Everyone pretends familiarity with Reason, yet everyone renounces it. This seems to be contradictory, but nothing is more true. Everyone pretends familiarity with Reason because at the base of his very being, every man finds engraved the fact that some share in Reason is a right essential to our nature. Yet everyone renounces it because we cannot unite ourselves to Reason and receive light and understanding from it without some sort of very distressing labor – distressing because nothing about it is flattering to the senses. Thus it is that, invincibly willing to be happy, men give up the labor of attention because it makes them presently unhappy. But when they give it up, they ordinarily pretend that they do so on account of Reason. The voluptuary believes that he must prefer present pleasure to a dry and abstract view of the Truth, all the more so because the latter costs a great deal of hardship. The ambitious man pretends that the object of his passion is something real, and that intelligible goods are only illusions and phantoms; for ordinarily men evaluate the solidity of goods by the impression they make upon the imagination and senses. There are even pious people who use Reason to prove that we must renounce Reason, that it is not the light but faith alone which must lead us, and that blind obedience is the principal virtue of Christians. Subordinates who are lazy and have an attitude of flattering their superiors often accommodate themselves to this so-called virtue; and the pride of those superiors is always very satisfied with this state of affairs, so that perhaps there will be found some people who will be scandalized that I should so honor Reason, and judge it above all other powers. And these people will imagine that I revolt against the legitimate authorities because I take its part and maintain that Reason is to decide and govern. But let the voluptuaries follow their senses, let the ambitious allow themselves to be carried off by their passions, let the average man live by opinion or allow himself to be taken wherever his imagination leads him. For us, let us try to silence this confused noise, this noise which is excited in us by sensible objects. Let us go back into ourselves and consult the inner Truth. But let us take great care not to confuse its responses with the secret inspirations of our corrupt imaginations. For it is much better, infinitely better, to obey the passions of those who have the right to command to lead, than to be wholly our own masters, to follow our own private passions, and to blind ourselves by erroneously adopting an expression of confidence to copy that which only the sight of Truth must give us. I have explained elsewhere the rules we must observe in order not to fall into this error, but I shall speak of them again below; for without them we cannot be solidly virtuous according to Reason.

NOTES

1. Cf. Pascal, *Pensées* #194, ed. Brunschvicg (Lafuma 335,336).

2. Cf. *Search After Truth*, II/II/4, concerning Seneca. Also cf. Descartes, "Letter to Elizabeth", 4 August 1645, in *A. T.* IV, 297.
3. For example, Guillaume du Vair, Cardinal Bona.
4. *Deuteronomy* 30:12,14. [M.]
5. Cf. St. Augustine, *De lib. arb.*, Bk. II, ch. 2. [M.]. This sentence was inserted in the edition of 1707. Note the change from the editions of 1684–1697, which read: "Faith is truly a great good, but this is because it leads us to understanding, and because without it we cannot merit understanding of some necessary and essential truths, ..."
6. Concerning the grace of light and that of feeling, cf. M's 1680 *Treatise on Nature and Grace [TNG]*: "I know of only two principles which directly and by themselves determine the motions of the soul – light and pleasure. Light discovers our respective goods to us, pleasure makes us taste them." (Disc. II, art. 2). The pleasure at issue here is that of feeling produced by the "victorious delight" of grace; cf. Pascal in *The Art of Persuasion*: "I know that He has willed that they [Divine Truths] enter from the heart into the mind, and not from the mind into the heart, so as to make humble that proud power of reasoning, when it pretends to have to be judge of the things the will chooses, and so as to make stronger that weak will which is corrupted by its unclean attachments." We need this God-given "delight" because we have a hard time feeling true goods, and because of sin we are not normally motivated to seek them if the slightest immediate sensual object distracts us. The delight is "prevenient" because it comes to us before we come to the Truth we need, and makes possible our turning from dissipation or concupiscence to Truth and true goods.
7. St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. II, ch. 3. [M.]

Chapter Three

The love of Order is not different from charity. Two loves, one as union, the other as kindness. The former rendered only to power, i.e., only to God. The latter must be proportioned to personal merit, just as our duties are proportioned to relative merit. Enlightened self-love is not contrary to love as union. The love of Order is common to all men. Types of love of Order: natural or free, temporary or habitual. At present, only that which is free, habitual and dominant justifies us. Thus virtue consists only in the free, habitual and dominant love of immutable Order.

I. Though I have not expressed the principal virtue, or the virtue of virtues by the authentic name of *Charity*, no one should believe that I intend to propose any other virtue than that which Jesus Christ canonized by these words: *All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments*: THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY STRENGTH, AND THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF [*Matt.* XXII:40,37,39]; and which St. Paul eulogized in that admirable chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, which begins: *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I have become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. [XIII:1]* We speak in different ways for different people. Scripture, which is made for all people, expresses truths only by terms whose usage is most commonly authorized. But anyone who wants to convince and to enlighten the most stubborn people – I mean the so-called sharp minds, and those we call philosophers, people who find difficulties everywhere – for these we must try to explain these sentiments in terms which, as much as possible, may be exempt from equivocation.

II. These words, *Thou shalt love God with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself,* are clear; but clear primarily to those inwardly taught by the unction of the spirit. For to other men these words are more obscure than one can imagine, because the verb 'to love' is equivocal. It signifies two things, among others: first, to unite ourselves willingly to some object considered as our good or as the cause of our happiness; and secondly, to wish for the good which someone else needs. We can love God in the first sense and our neighbor in the second sense, for it is essential to divinity to be sufficient unto itself. *Thou art my God,* says the Prophet, *for thou hast no need of my goods. [Psalms XV:2]* And it would be a kind of idolatry to love our neighbor in the first sense, for it

is in God alone that the power is found to act in spirits and make them happy.[1]

III. Similarly, the word 'God' is equivocal, and infinitely more so than we would believe. Some men imagine they love God, while in effect they love only an immense phantom they have made for themselves. They believe they love God though they live in disorder, i.e., without loving Order above all else. They deceive themselves. Far from loving God, they are not even aware of Him. *For whoever says he knows God and observes not the commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him: but whoever observes them, loves God perfectly*, says St. John [*I John* 2:4–6]. It is thus that we fully know that we understand God, when we observe His commandments.

IV. Thou shalt love God *with all thy strength. All* is clear enough, but *thy strength* may give rise to error by those who have no humility or who have false humility. The former may draw from this commandment some grounds for vanity, and the latter, for criminal negligence. *And thy neighbor as thy self*: In the parable of the Samaritan, Jesus Christ teaches us that all men are neighbors. This term 'neighbor' is still not too clear; the gross and sensual Jews have always taken it in a false sense. *As thyself:* certainly those who love true goods are the only ones who fulfill the commandments by loving their neighbor as themselves. For a father who loves his son with the greatest tenderness, but who carefully procures for him all the sensible goods, no matter how much love he has for him, is still ever so far from loving him as God would have us love our neighbor.

V. The words, *Thou shalt love God,* and what follows, may thus appear obscure. But in truth they are such only for those who like to quibble, or who do not go back into themselves to see this commandment written there by the hand of God. These words are obscure only to those whom the unction of the Holy Spirit has not instructed [*I John* 2:27], for whom the Holy Scripture is a closed book. For even the most gross and stupid people fully understand this precept, if they are pious people. They know that all application of the mind and all movements of the heart must strive toward God; that we must occupy ourselves only with Him, as much as that is possible; that it is not really loving Him to be short on tenderness when performing our duties; and that to violate the Order of justice, the immutable Order, is in effect to offend the Divine Majesty. Far from loving others as if able to do good for them, they fear the approach of the great, and are pleased only among those who need their help. They do not love men as their good, nor as able to enjoy together those goods which pass away, goods which serve only to cause dissension everywhere. Rather, they love men as co-heirs of the true goods. True goods are such because we possess them without dividing them up among us; we enjoy them without becoming disgusted with them; we love them without seeing them vanish as do the pleasures of the present life. The father loves his son, of course; but he would rather love to see him deformed than to see him misgoverned in his ways. He would rather love to see him sick, dead or hung on a gallows than to see him dead to the eyes of the One who has never had a more agreeable sight than that of His only Son hung on a cross to re-establish Order in the universe. Pious people fully understand

the law of God, because they are instructed by the same mind which dictated that law. But, since I am speaking primarily to philosophers, and it is not at all in my power to give that holy unction which spreads light in minds, I believe I must try to prove by Reason and explain as much as I can by clear terms, the truths of which they are perhaps not sufficiently convinced.

VI. So I believe I must say that justifying charity, or the virtue which really makes just and virtuous those who possess it, is properly the dominant love for immutable Order. But I must explain these terms in order to dissipate the obscurities which ordinarily accompany abstract ideas.

VII. I have already said [in Ch. One] *that immutable Order consists only in relations of perfection, which exist between the intelligible ideas contained in the substance of the Eternal Word.* Now we must esteem and love nothing but perfection. Thus esteem and love must be conformed to Order. I mean that there must be the same relation between two loves as there is between the perfection or reality of the objects which excite those loves. If that proportion is missing, they do not conform to Order. For this it is evident that charity or the love for God is a consequence of the love for Order, and that we must esteem and love God not only more than all things, but infinitely more than all things, because between the infinite and the finite there can be no finite relation.

VIII. Now, there are two main types of love, a love *as kindness* and what we may call love *as union.* A brutal man loves the object of his passion with love *as union* because, regarding this object as the cause of his happiness, he wishes to be united to it in order that that object might act in him and make him happy. He approaches it by the movement of his heart, i.e., by his affections, as well as by the movement of his body. We love persons of merit with love *as kindness*, for we love them even when they are in no position to do any good for us. We love them because they have more perfection and virtue than others. Thus the power to do good for us, or that type of perfection which relates to our happiness – in a word, goodness – excites in us love *as union*, and the other perfections excite love *as esteem* and *as kindness*.[2] Now, only God is good, only He has power to act in us. He does not really communicate this perfection to creatures. He only establishes them as occasional causes, in order to produce certain effects, for genuine power is incommunicable. Thus all love *as union* must strive toward God.

IX. For example, we can *approach* fire, for the fire is the *occasional* cause of heat. But we cannot love it with love *as union* without violating Order, for fire has no power, much less power over that in us which makes us capable of love. It is the same with other creatures, even with Angels and demons: we must not love them with love as union, a love which honors power; for all things being absolutely powerless, we must not love them at all. When I say love, I also mean fear, or hate; the soul must remain unmoved in their presence. It is allowable for the body, by local movement, to approach fire or avoid a collapsing building. But let the soul love and fear only God, if by love we mean a free love, a love by choice, a reasoning love. For, since the union of body and soul has been changed to one of mutual dependence, it is almost beyond our power

to prevent sensible goods from exciting in us some sort of love for them. The movements of the soul naturally respond to those of the body; and an object which repels or attracts us, almost always inspires in us either aversion or love.

X. It is not the same with love as esteem or as kindness, as it is with love as union. God is infinitely more lovable by the former type of love than all His creatures put together. But since He has really communicated some perfection to them, and since some of them are capable of enjoying the same happiness with us, they are effectively estimable and lovable. Order itself requires that we esteem and love them according to whatever perfection they possess, be it natural or moral, at least as much as these perfections are known to us. It is absolutely impossible for us to esteem and love them exactly in proportion as they are lovable, since often their perfections are unknown to us, and also since we never exactly know those relations which exist between perfections in the way in which we know the relations between magnitudes, which latter we can express in numbers or by incommensurable lines. However, faith diminishes any difficulties of this sort. For since the finite, by its relation to the infinite, acquires an infinite value, we easily see that we must love infinitely more those creatures which have or can have more relation to God than all such those which are not in His image or which have no such union or relation to Him as we have. We easily see that, other things being equal, a just man, a member of Jesus Christ, is more lovable by this type of love than a thousand of the impious; and that God justly judges the worth of His creatures, and prefers one of His adopted children to all the nations of the earth.

XI. It is certain that love as esteem or as kindness must regulate duties. However, we must not imagine that we must always perform more duties toward the just than toward sinners, to the faithful than to heretics and even pagans. For we must take care to note that there are perfections of many sorts: personal or absolute perfections, and relative perfections. Personal perfections must be the immediate object of love as esteem or as kindness. But relative perfections are not worthy of this love or of any other. Rather, only the object to which these perfections are relative, is lovable. We must love and honor merit wherever we find it; for merit is a personal perfection, which must govern our love as esteem and as kindness. But it must not always govern the magnitude and quality of our duties. On the contrary, we must render many duties to our Prince, to our father, or to those in authority, for authority is necessary to conserve order in states, order being the most estimable thing in the world. But the honor we render to authorities, the love we bear toward them, must terminate only in God: *It is to God, and not to man,* says St. Paul [*Ephesians* VI:7], to whom is related the honor we render to power, since power to act is found only in God. Similarly, if a man has natural talents useful to the conversion of others, even though he may have neither virtue nor merit, we must love him with a love as esteem relative to those talents, and render to him even more duties than to one who has much personal merit and yet cannot be useful to anyone. But I shall explain myself further in what follows.[3] Here I am only saying a word, so as to prevent the reader's mind from thoughtlessly rushing on

ahead to a place I do not want to lead him.

XII. Self-love, the irreconcilable enemy of virtue or of the dominant love for immutable Order, can be accommodated to love as union which responds and renders honor to that power capable of acting in us. To accomplish this, it is sufficient if this self-love becomes enlightened. Man invincibly wills to be happy; he clearly sees that only God can make him happy. Supposing this, and excluding the remainder (of which I do not speak), it is evident that he can desire to be united to God. For to remove all equivocation, I am not speaking of a man who knows that God rewards only merit and who finds none of it in himself. I am speaking of a man who pays attention only to the power and the goodness of God, or to whom the testimony of his conscience and of the faith give him, so to speak, free access to approach God and be joined to Him.

XIII. But it is not the same concerning love as esteem or as kindness which we must bear toward ourselves. Self-love is almost[4] always disordered. The immutable Order of justice requires that reward be proportioned to merit, and happiness to virtue or to the perfection of the spirit. Self-love does not willingly suffer limitations to its honor and glory. However enlightened this love may be, if it is not just, it is necessarily contrary to Order and cannot become just without being this love may be, if it is not just, it is necessarily contrary to Order and cannot become just without being diminished or destroyed. Nevertheless, when our self-love is enlightened, when it is governed, when it is in accord with the love for Order, then we have the greatest perfection of which we are capable. For certainly a man who always puts himself in the rank befitting him, who wills to be happy only as much as he merits being so, who seeks his happiness in the justice which he expects from the just Judge, who lives in faith and remains satisfied, firm and patient in the hope and foretaste of true goods – this man, I say, is a solidly good man, even though it be a love he has for himself which is the natural principle, governed and rectified by grace, of the love of Order above all things.

XIV. We must not imagine that the love of Order could be similar to those virtues, or, rather, to those particular habits which can be either lost or acquired.[5] For immutable Order is not at all a particular creature which we could either begin or totally cease to love. It is in God, and it is constantly impressed upon us. It is a law written in indelible letters. It is the Divine Word, natural and necessary object of all thought and of all movements of spirits. We can either begin or cease to love a creature, for man is not made for creatures. But we cannot wholly renounce Reason, we cannot cease to love Order: for man is made to live by Reason, to live according to Order. Thus the love for Order naturally governs wherever self-love is not contrary to it. Often it even governs when self-love or concupiscence resists it, I do not say only in the just in whom it governs absolutely, but even in the wicked, where self-love is sovereign. For the beauty of justice often touches even the unjust in such a ways that self-love finds profit in conforming itself to Order.[6]

XV. Certainly man sees only because God enlightens him. He wills only because God animates him or makes him love. But God enlightens only by His

Word, animates only by the love He bears toward Himself. Now God cannot enlighten man by a false reason, or impress upon him a love contrary to His own. All light comes from the Word, and all movement comes from the Holy Spirit because in the last analysis only God acts, and acts only by the wisdom which enlightens Him and by the love which He bears toward Himself. Thus, insofar as man thinks, insofar as he loves, he will not be separated from Reason, and will not be without love for Order. For to fall into error, we must use Reason wrongly; but we must use it, because a person who sees nothing cannot judge anything, cannot fall into error. So too, in order to love evil, he must love the good. For we can only love evil because we regard it as a good, because of the natural impression we have toward the good. Thus self-love does not annihilate the love for Order. It only manages to corrupt love for Order by relating itself to that which has no necessary relation to it, or, rather, by making some temporary happiness preferable to the perfection of our being, to virtue and the future felicity which will be virtue's reward. For man, whether he loves objects in relation to himself or to something else, always loves those which are or which appear to be better. This is because the love of Order, or of goods in proportion to their perfection or goodness, is a natural and inviolable love.

XVI. I say this primarily so that the wicked may at least know that they are such, and that the just may beware their own virtue. For since men, no matter how miserable they may be, feel some righteousness in themselves, i.e., feel some of the natural love for Order which they have, they consequently imagine themselves really to have virtue. But in order to possess virtue, it is not enough to love Order with a natural love. We must go on to love it with a love which is free, enlightened and reasonable. Moreover, it is not enough to love it only at those times when it agrees with our self-love. Rather, we must sacrifice to it all that it requires of us – our present happiness, and then, if it demands it, our very being. For virtue consists only in the dominant love for immutable Order. Our heart is perfectly governed only when it is disposed to conform itself to Order in all things. Anyone who would will that on some occasions Order should conform itself to his own particular inclinations, by so doing would have an untrustworthy mind and a corrupt heart. No matter how wicked he may be, no man fails to see (if only rarely) some beauty in Order, and be charmed by it. Apparently even the demons still have some love for Order. They are ready to conform themselves to it – when it requires nothing which would be contrary to their self-love; and perhaps some of them would be willing to offer it some slight sacrifice. They are not all equally wicked; thus they are not all equally opposed to Order. Judas was a poor wretch dominated by avarice; yet we can believe that in order to deliver his best friend from death, he would easily have sacrificed a little money. He sold the Savior for thirty pieces of silver; but perhaps he would not have delivered Him up if the sum had been smaller. In order to be virtuous it is not sufficient, then, to love Order – we must love it more than all other things; we must have a firm resolution to follow it in all things, whatever the cost. We must be ready to sacrifice to it, not only little pleasures or slight pains, but our happiness, reputation, our present life, in the

hope of receiving from God a reward such as only He can give.

XVII. I believe I must add that a simple resolution to follow Order in all things will not justify us before God, even if it is quite a strong resolution. For God, just Judge of the dispositions of the spirit, does not judge a soul by any of its fleeting and temporary movements. He judges it by that of the stable and permanent which He finds in it. Acts pass away; and anyone who, finding himself strongly moved by the beauty of Order, takes a sacred vow to sacrifice all things to it, must still fear for himself. For it will almost never happen that one single act can form the greatest of all habits, and that one temporary movement of the mind could destroy an inveterate disposition of obeying the movements of self-love. On the contrary, habits are stable; and though a just man may fall seven times, he should console himself – God knows the foundation of his heart. But let him be careful not to be seduced or corrupted by concupiscence; and since sensible objects are always making dangerous impressions on his imagination, let him take care that one day it does not openly revolt against the severe laws which restrain it. For the habit of charity is by far the most delicate, the most difficult to acquire and conserve – much more so than criminal habits. This is because one single deliberate act, one deadly sin always dissipates it. The primary reason for this is that we are not able to love God without the help of grace, and it is just that we should lose our right to this help because of our voluntary infidelity. Moreover concupiscence does not leave us, even though we voluntarily resist it. A man is just before God when his heart is truly more disposed to love the good than the evil, with a free and reasonable love, whether this disposition be acquired by acts of free and reasonable love, or otherwise. But, since we cannot feel our own habits, since we only understand what is presently happening in the soul, and since charity does not make itself felt as does concupiscence (which is often excited), therefore we cannot ascertain what condition we are in. Thus we must always be wary concerning ourselves, without getting discouraged, and work until our deaths to destroy self-love or that concupiscence which is constantly renewed in us, and to fortify the love for Order which is weakened or corrupted as soon as we fail to keep a watch on ourselves.

XVIII. In view of what follows, it must be noted that there are two types of acts of love: first, natural or purely voluntary[7] acts, and second, free acts. All pleasure infallibly produces a natural movement of love in the soul, i.e., it makes us naturally, necessarily, purely voluntarily love the object which causes or seems to cause pleasure. But not all pleasure produces free love; for free love does not always conform to natural law. It does not depend on pleasure alone. Rather, it depends on Reason, on freedom, on the soul's strength to resist a movement pushing against it. It is the consent of the will which makes the essential difference with this type of love. These two different acts of love form our habits, each after its own way. Natural love leaves the soul with a disposition for natural love; love by choice leaves a habit of love by choice. For when we have often consented to love a certain good, we have a tendency to, or a felicity in consenting to it once again.

XIX. Here I must note that every disposition of love, be it natural or free, corrupts the soul and makes it deserving of God's hatred if its object is the creature; and makes it just and agreeable to God, if its object is the Creator – provided, however, that the disposition of natural love be alone in the heart. For if there are two habitual loves, of the two different sorts, God has no concern for the natural love, but only for the free love.

XX. For example, a child coming into the world is a sinner and deserves God's anger, because God loves Order and the child's heart is disordered or turned toward the body because of an habitual disposition of natural love, necessary and purely voluntary, which comes from his parents without any consent on his part.[8] At the first moment of his creation, Adam was just, because his heart was disposed to love God even though he had not yet acquired any habit of consenting to that love. The disposition, or natural habit, when it is alone, either corrupts or justifies the soul. For when there is only one habitual love in the heart, and that love is good, there is nothing in that heart except what is lovable in the eyes of the One who loves Order; and the contrary if this love is a bad sort. But when there are two habits, of different types of love, God is concerned only with the free type. Apparently the just have much more facility and natural disposition to love bodies than to love true goods. Sensible pleasures being nearly continual, and the prevenient delight of grace being much more rare, that type of habit which is a natural consequence of pleasure disposes them more to loving sensible objects than true goods. This is evident by what happens to the just in dreams, or when they are not on their guard and act without reflection; for at those times they almost always follow the movements of concupiscence. But those ungoverned deeds do not corrupt them, and God does not regard them as sinners, because the habit of virtue is not at all changed. Acts which are not free cannot change free habits; only free acts can do that. Thus it is obvious by all we have said, *that the love for Order which justifies us before God must be an habitual, free and dominant love for immutable Order.* And therefore, when I speak in the future of the love for Order, I shall ordinarily mean this habitual love, and not temporary love or naturally habitual love, or non-dominant love, or any other movement or disposition of the soul.

NOTES

1. St. Augustine, *Treatise XXIII on St. John.*
2. "As esteem and" added in 1697. For explanation of how M. expands this sort of love into two distinct sorts of love, thereby making three instead of two, see below, pt. II, ch. 6, secs. 6 & 7; then Pt. II, chs. 7 and 8.
3. In pt. II, esp. chs. 6 ff.
4. "Almost," "the immutable" and "of justice" added in 1697.
5. Cf. preceding chapter. [M.].
6. In the editions of 1697 and 1707, this sentence is added, and accompanied by a reference to St. Augustine, *De Trin.*, Bk. XIV, ch. 15.

7. M. uses 'voluntarily' to mean the opposite of 'freely'. As the next sentence shows, it means 'unavoidable,' 'natural' in the sense that nature 'runs on its own', automatically, and so is ungoverned by reason.
8. See pt. I, ch. 7 of Bk. II of the *Search After Truth*, and the Eighth clarification on that chapter. [M.].

Chapter Four

Two fundamental truths of this Treatise: first, acts produce habits, and habits produce acts. Second, the soul does not always produce acts by its dominant habit. Thus the sinner can avoid committing a particular sin, and a just man can lose his charity, because there is no sinner without some love for Order, nor is there any just man without some self-love. We cannot become just before God by the strength of free will. Means of acquiring and conserving Charity, broadly outlined. The order I shall follow in the explanation of these means.

I. In order to explain carefully the means for acquiring and conserving the dominant love of immutable Order, two truths fundamental to the first part of this treatise must be presupposed: first, ordinarily virtues are acquired and fortified by acts; second, when we act we do not always act in accordance with our dominant virtue. What I am saying of virtue holds equally for all good or bad habits, and even for the passions natural to us.

II. All men are sufficiently convinced by their own experience that acts form and conserve those habits which are somehow related to the body. For example, everyone would agree that we can acquire the habit of dancing, playing an instrument, or speaking a language by acts of those sorts. Many are persuaded that by heavy drinking we become drunkards, and that companionship of women makes us soft and effeminate, and the companionship of military men usually makes us gallant or brutal. But few seriously reflect that the soul, too, by its own acts, takes on habits which it cannot easily undo. A mathematician easily imagines that it is open to him not to love mathematics, and to abandon such studies. An ambitious man foolishly persuades himself that he is not the slave of his passion. And no matter how miserably enslaved we may be by some habit, we all believe that all we have to do to break the bonds which enslave us can be done by us with one blow. On this same principle, we keep putting off our conversion. For since, in order to be converted, we need only scorn those goods we recognize to be vain and blameworthy, and to love God, who certainly and alone deserves to be loved, we all persuade ourselves that we now have and always will have sufficient reason and strength to make and carry out such a just and reasonable plan.

III. Moreover, since the will is never coerced, we imagine that everything we will, is willed by us precisely because we will it. We never think that our wills are excited within us in consequence of our inner habits. For since these habits

are modifications of our very being, which is unknown to us, they make us will in a manner which seems to depend only on us. We will so frivolously that we believe nothing obliges us to will as we do. It is true that nothing obliges us to will, except ourselves. But that which is our self is not our purely natural being, nor is it perfectly free to do either good or evil. Rather, it is our being, habituated to do the one or the other by modifications which either corrupt or perfect it, and which make us either just or sinners in God's eyes. And it is these habits which must be either augmented or destroyed by acts, which are the natural causes of habits.

IV. To that end, we must go on to presuppose the second important truth, that the soul does not always produce acts of its dominant habit. It is evident that if a person in whom the disposition of avarice is dominant should never act except from some movement of avarice, then far from becoming liberal, his vice would continually increase, according to the principle we have just discussed, viz. that acts produce and fortify habits. But it must also be within the power of a corrupt man to produce acts of virtue, in order that he might rid himself of his own evil habits and become a good man. But this proposition must be explained.

V. Turning then to particular habits, I say, first of all, that a miser, for example, may act on a movement of ambition. This is neither difficult to believe nor difficult to prove. But in the second place, I say that a miser may even act contrary to the miserliness which dominates him. For a miser may also be an ambitious man. Presupposing this much, if his passion for riches is not excited, and the one of ambition is excited; or if his miserliness is less excited than his ambition in some proportion reciprocal to the strength of the two passions, then it is certain that the miser will do an act of generosity if in that moment he decides to act (and such a decision is certainly in his power). In the long run we can only will the good, and in the moment of decision the miser finds it better to do the generous act than not to do it, and to sacrifice his love of money for his love of glory. From this it is evident that for reasons of self-love, the sinner is able to abstain from following a particular movement of his passions which otherwise would be likely to determine him, if he can only awaken some contrary passions and, until they are awakened, suspend the consent of his will to the former ones. But this does not suffice to make it clear that anyone who sins can refrain from sinning; that the sinner can rid himself of his evil habits and that the just man can lose his charity.

VI. In fact, it is not so much a question of particular habits of miserliness or generosity, as of love of Order or self-love. And though we may agree that a miser can do a generous deed, I shall doubtless be challenged if I say that a pagan could act conforming to Order, and do so by a love for Order. But I do not want to argue: I am going to try to explain my thought clearly. Let everyone follow that which the evidence of Reason and the authority of the faith obligate him to believe, and abandon me if he should thereby find that I have wandered from the path which must lead me in the search for Truth.

VII. If sinners or pagans had no love at all for Order, they would be al-

together incorrigible. If the just no longer had any self-love, they would be impeccable. For acts form and conserve habits according to the principle I have just explained. But we might suppose that the sinner has only self-love. In that case, he could only act by self-love, and therefore all of his actions would augment the corruption of his heart. The just man, on the contrary, might be supposed to have love only for Order. He then would act only by love of Order. All his actions would augment his virtues. Therefore the sinner is incorrigible and the just man impeccable, on the supposition that the sinner or pagan has only self-love and the just only love of Order. But I believe I have sufficiently proven, in the preceding chapter, that in the greatest sinners there is always some disposition to love Order; and I do not believe we may doubt that most good people always retain some remnant of self-love.

VIII. It is true that a pagan can never acquire charity, nor do an action which merits the aids we need if we are to acquire charity, the dominant love of immutable Order. But he can do actions conforming to the order of good, and meritorious actions (See Ch. 1 [M.]). For a pagan always has some idea of Order. This idea is indelible (See Ch. 3 [M.].). A pagan always has some love for Order. This love is natural and immortal. Thus, if the action of self-love is not opposing the action of love for Order, then an excited love for Order will produce its acts and will act. And even though self-love may oppose the love for Order, if the love for Order is more excited than self-love, then in a proportion reciprocal to the magnitude of these two habitual lives and their present movements, love for Order will surpass self-love if in that moment we decide to act.

IX. For example, suppose an innocent person is led off to be executed (See ch. 6, secs. XV & XVI, below [M.]). Order forbids this, and a pagan knows it; by speaking out he can prevent this disorder. The death or life of the man, I am supposing, does not affect the pagan's self-love. Certainly he will prevent the death, or at least will have enough strength and reason to speak out to try to prevent such a disorder. For myself, I do not doubt in the least that he would prevent it under the suppositions I have made, for all men naturally love Order and are so united to it that Order cannot be offended without offending them in some way. Supposing the same things, even if this pagan is a miser, if his passion is a bit dormant or, though excited, if he is asked for only one penny to save the man from death, certainly he will give it or at least he will be able to do some action contrary to his self-love. For, in effect, such an act is not sufficiently opposed to his self-love; and also Order, which he is naturally disposed to love, would be greatly offended if he did not make this small sacrifice.

X. Now these actions are good because they are conformable to Order; and they are meritorious because they are accompanied by sacrifice of self-love to the love for Order. But these actions are not meritorious of true goods or of anything which leads to true goods. This is because they are only slight sacrifices, proceeding from a corrupt heart, where blind and disordered self-love is absolute master.

XI. We can have no right to true goods if we are not just in God's sight, and

we cannot be just before God unless we have more of a habit to love Order than to love all other things, including ourselves; or (what amounts to the same thing) unless we are habituated to love ourselves only according to Order, and do not will to be happy except insofar as we merit happiness. Thus, even if we presuppose that a pagan could momentarily love Order more than all things, it can only be done by the movement of grace. Since He does not judge the soul by what is transient in it but rather by its stable and permanent habits, God could not regard this man as just and holy. For one act of the love of God above all other things cannot naturally change an inveterate habit of self-love. That cannot occur without using the Sacraments which Jesus Christ instituted for our justification (I shall explain this in ch. 8. [M.]). They give one single act of love of God the strength to produce a habit in the soul, which habit alone gives us the right to true goods. Thus no philosopher, neither Socrates nor Plato nor Epictetus, no matter how enlightened they were concerning their duties, nor even those people we believe to have spilled their blood for the Order of justice, can be saved if they have not received that grace which faith alone obtains. Since the just God decides to judge them only by the permanent habit of their will; and since it could be naturally possible to bend our heads to the executioner's ax due to a temporary movement of love for justice, even that act would still not change an inveterate and natural disposition of self-love, a disposition conformed and augmented at all times by the movement of concupiscence throughout the course of our lives.

XII. Nevertheless, since pagans always retain some love for Order, they are able to avoid sins they commit by awakening that love, by avoiding what excites self-love, and by not consenting until forced to do so, in the way I shall explain in what follows. But they cannot really fulfill God's commandments. They cannot love Order more than themselves on all occasions. Reason must convince us, and faith teaches us, that they never can. Only those who have faith could do this, and even among them, not all have an equal power. It is only the just who lack nothing needed for such a life. As for the others, they are able to pray, if they know their weakness and if they will to be healed of it. By aid of their faith, and as a consequence of the promises of Jesus Christ, and not by the necessity of the immutable Order of justice, they can merit the immediate power to observe, on all occasions, the commandments of God.

XIII. I wish to repeat, in a few words, the essential truths I have just proven and which are necessary for what follows. Habits are acquired and fortified by acts. But the dominant habit does not always act. We can do acts which have no relation to it, and sometimes we do acts which are opposed to it. Therefore we can change our habits.

XIV. Moreover, no man, however corrupt, is without some disposition to love Order. Every free and reasonable man can therefore reform, though I do not say he can make himself just.

XV. But, supposing the aids of grace, every man can be made just. For the dominant love of immutable Order, which justifies us before God, is a stable and permanent disposition; it is a habit. Now we can acquire this habit by the

aid of grace not only because, by means of momentary grace, we can freely perform so many or such fervent acts of love for Order above all things that a habit will result therefrom; but more easily and surely because we can approach the Sacraments in the movement of this love, and the Sacraments of the new covenant impart justifying charity to the heart.

XVI. Everything we must do to acquire and conserve the dominant love of immutable Order, consists in carefully seeking which things awaken this love and make it produce its acts, and which can prevent the momentary movement of self-love. Now I see only two principles which determine the natural movement of the will and excite habits: these two are the light, and feeling. Without one or the other of these two principles, no habit can be naturally formed, and those which are already formed remain inactive. If we will only pay attention to our inner feeling of ourselves, we will be easily persuaded that the will never momentarily loves a good unless the light discloses it or pleasures make it present to the soul. And if we consult Reason, we shall recognize that this must be so; for otherwise the Author of nature would have imprinted useless movements in the will.

XVII. Therefore, any specific movement in the soul is excited only by pleasure or by light. The light discloses the good to the soul, and the soul loves it by an invincible impression; pleasure ascertains for the soul that the good is momentarily present. For the soul is never more convinced of the presence of its good than when it finds itself momentarily affected by the pleasure which makes it happy. Let us now seek the means by which the light can be spread to our minds, and by which our hearts can be affected by feelings appropriate to our plan, which is to excite in ourselves acts of the love for Order, and to keep ourselves from forming acts of self-love. For it is evident that all precepts of ethics depend absolutely on these means. Here, then, is the order I shall follow in this search:

XVIII. First, I shall examine the ways open to us for becoming enlightened concerning our duties. The light must always occur first, since it is much more our responsibility to see the good than to enjoy it. For ordinarily our wills are the direct and immediate occasional causes of those things with which we are acquainted, and they are never causes of our feelings. Next I shall examine what are the occasional causes of our feelings, and what power we have over them, in order that by those means we might determine the Author of grace and nature to affect us so that the love for Order may be aroused in us and animate us, and so that self-love or concupiscence may remain immobile.

XIX. I shall begin with the feelings which God produces in consequence of the Order of grace, because these can excite acts of love for Order in us, which acts can then develop into a habit. Next, I shall speak of the feelings God produces in us in consequence of the Order of nature, feelings which can only weaken our evil habits indirectly, and which are almost always better avoided if we are to conserve the soul's power and freedom of loving true goods, and of living according to Order. For the various ways in which we rid ourselves of these feelings are one of the principal parts of ethics, and most of the names for

virtue are invented merely to express the different habits we acquire by avoiding these feelings which shake and misgovern the soul.

Chapter Five

On the *Strength* of the mind. Our desires are the occasional causes of our knowledge. It is difficult to contemplate abstract ideas. The strength of the mind consists in acquiring the habit of sustaining the effort of attention. Means for acquiring this strength of the mind. We must silence the senses, imagination and passions, govern our studies, meditate only on clear ideas, etc.

I. Faith and Reason ascertain for us that only God is the true cause of all things. But experience teaches us that He acts only according to certain laws He has made for Himself, and which He constantly follows. For example, only God moves bodies. Perhaps a considerable amount of discussion would be needed to convince some people of this. But, taking it as a presupposition proved elsewhere,[1] it is evident by experience that God only moves bodies when they are struck. Thus we may say that the striking together of bodies is the *occasional* cause which infallibly determines the efficacy of the general law by which God produces a thousand diverse movements in His work.[2]

II. Also, only God spreads light in minds. This is a truth I have already sufficiently explained.[3] But we need search nowhere except in ourselves for the *occasional* cause which determines Him to communicate it to us. By a general law which He constantly follows and all of whose consequences He has foreseen, God has linked the presence of ideas to the mind's paying attention: when we are masters of our attention and make use of it, then without fail light is spread within us, in direct proportion to our effort. This is so true that ungrateful and stupid men make it a subject of vanity; they imagine themselves to be the cause of their knowledge, because of the faithfulness with which God heeds their desires. For, having an inner feeling of their effort of attention, and having o feeling of their effort of attention, and having no knowledge of God's operation within them, they consider the effort of their own desires (which should convince them of their powerlessness) to be the true cause of the ideas which accompany their effort.

III. Now, God had to establish us as the *occasional* cause of our knowledge, for several reasons, the chief of which is that otherwise we would not be able to be masters of our wills. For since our wills must be enlightened in order to be excited, it if were not in our power to think, then it would not be in our power to will. Thus, we would not be free with a perfect freedom nor, for the same reason, would we be in any condition to merit the true goods for which we are made.

IV. The mind's attention is thus a natural prayer by which we obtain Reason, which enlightens us. But because of sin, the mind often finds itself in frightfully barren spells; it cannot pray, i.e., the effort of attention fatigues and discourages it. In fact, this effort is at first very great, and the reward quite mediocre. Furthermore, we continually feel the attraction, the pressure and the agitation of the imagination and passions, whose inspirations and movements it would be so easy to follow. However, attention is a necessity; we must call upon it in order to be enlightened. There is no other way to obtain light and understanding than by the effort of attention. Faith is a gift of God, which we do not merit. But ordinarily understanding is given only to those who merit it. Faith is pure grace, in every sense; but understanding of the Truth is a sort of grace which must be merited by effort, by cooperation with grace.

V. Now those who are made for this effort and who are always attentive to the truth which must lead them, have a habit which doubtless should merit a name more magnificent than those given to the most impressive virtues. Yet even though that habit or virtue is inseparable from love for Order, it is so little known among us that I do not know of anyone honoring it by giving it a particular name. Permit me, then, to designate it by the equivocal name of *strength of mind.*

VI. We must begin early in life if we are to acquire that genuine *strength* by which the mind is sustained throughout the effort of attention. For naturally we cannot acquire habits except by acts. We cannot be strengthened except by exercise. But perhaps the difficulty lies in beginning: we remember that we began, and that we were obliged to stop. At this point we get discouraged; we believe ourselves incapable of meditation; we disavow Reason. If we do that, then no matter what we might say to justify our laziness and negligence, still (at least in part), we disavow virtue. For without the effort of attention we shall never understand the grandeur of religion, the sanctity of ethics, the smallness of all which is not God, the ridiculousness of the passions and all our inner miseries. Without this effort, the soul will live in blindness and disorder since there is no other natural way to obtain the light which must lead us. We shall be eternally restless and in a strange perplexity, for we fear everything when we walk in the shadows and think ourselves surrounded by cliffs. It is true that faith leads and supports, but that is because it always produces some light by the attention it excites in us. Only light may really reassure minds when they have as many enemies to fear as we have.

VII. Then what do we do to begin without getting discouraged? Let us see what discourages us: we meditate with difficulty, and without reward. The difficulties are discouraging and on the other hand the reward is not consoling enough. Thus we must diminish the difficulty and augment the reward. This is clear. But nothing is more difficult. It is even impossible, as far as most men are concerned. That is why we needed a more direct pathway to ascertain the Truth, and why we needed the visible authority of the Church to lead us. Even those who have the best minds, if they deviate from the faith or abandon the analogy of the faith,[4] are deviating from the path which leads to understanding. They are

breaking the chain of truths which hold together in such a way that if one falsehood is presupposed as if it were true, all the sciences could then be overthrown (providing we know how to reason deductively).[5]

VIII. In order to diminish our difficulty in meditation, we must avoid everything which unprofitably dissipates the mind's capacity. And since nothing dissipates it so much as what affects it, surprises it or agitates it, it is obvious that we must carefully avoid all objects which flatter the senses and awaken the passions. Since feelings and passions are vivid and sensible modifications of the very substance of the soul, it necessarily follows that because intelligible ideas only modify it gently, they therefore are dissipated in the presence of sensible objects, no matter what effort we may make to retain them and examine the relations between them. Moreover, we are persuaded that it is up to us to recall intellectual ideas, and experience teaches that our wills are not the occasional causes of our feelings. Thus we are easily preoccupied with feelings, by which we enjoy momentary goods, the kind we cannot recall. In so doing we leave behind pure ideas, in which alone we could discover the truth which lasts, and which can be recalled and contemplated whenever we wish to do so. We must decide promptly concerning those goods which might soon escape us, whereas we can return to examine those which are stable and always present. Finally, we will to be momentarily happy; we never will to be unhappy. Momentary pleasures make us momentarily happy, and pain unhappy. Thus all feeling preoccupies the mind, whether we are partaking of pleasure or pain. The will is dominated by all movements of the soul which have either momentary good or momentary evil as object. Therefore, we must make very great efforts to contemplate the truth when our senses are bombarded and our passions are excited. And since experience teaches us that our efforts here are often useless, it is not possible that the tired soul should not be chagrined and discouraged. Thus it is that those who use prayer give this important advice: we must constantly work for the mortification of the senses, and not mix in affairs which do not concern us and which may, by consequence of our indiscreet interference, excite in us a thousand troublesome movements.

IX. The second thing to do is to avoid as much as possible all sciences and employments which have nothing but glamour to recommend them – those sciences where only the memory labors, and those studies and employments where the imagination is too much exercised. When a man has his head full, when he is satisfied with imaginary riches and is inflated with pride, he scorns the effort of attention. Or, if he recognizes its necessity, the efforts needed to get away from the false ideas his memory has furnished, would be too much for him. And when the imagination has been exercised too much, the evidence of Truth no longer affects us so vividly. This is because nothing is more opposed to Reason than an imagination overly learned, overly delicate, overly active or (rather) malign and corrupt. For the imagination must always be silent when Reason speaks. But when we are in the habit of exercising it, it interrupts and constantly revolts. So we see that the learned ones of whom I speak have hardly any piety, and the self-styled great wits have hardly any Religion. For indeed,

there is no greater blindness than that with which these two groups are afflicted. Pride dulls the light in them. This is because, being always very satisfied with themselves, satiated, or, rather, without any hunger for the Truth, they cannot resolve to earn by the sweat of their brow the bread of the soul, the nourishment whose savor they cannot taste.

X. Man must labor with his mind to earn the life of the mind – this is an absolute necessity. But to work with the mind in order to gain gold, to acquire honor – nothing is more servile. It is conforming to Order if an artisan works with his body to gain the life of the body, to have bread: by moving his body he can at least nourish his mind and occupy it with good thoughts. But that a magistrate or a man of affairs, that a merchant should squander the strength of his mind to acquire some good which is often useless to the life of the body and always dangerous to that of the mind, is arrant folly. Thus we must, in the third place, avoid all employments which take away the freedom of the mind, unless God engages us in such employments by an extraordinary calling. If the charity or order of the state in which we live obligates us, and we take up a trust only insofar as we are able to bear it, God will supply in us the equivalent of what we would have been able to obtain by the effort of meditation. We shall always find enough time to examine ourselves concerning our duties, if it is not ambition or interest with animates us in the exercise of our employment.

XI. Everyone knows well enough which things agitate him and which are distracting to him, or at least everyone can instruct himself about these matters by consulting experience, i.e., his inner feelings of himself. Therefore I shall not halt here to note in detail what we must do to facilitate meditation. Only the body weighs down the mind; that is the principle of our stupidity. All sensible objects act on us only by way of our bodies. Thus we easily see that we need only quiet the senses, imagination and passions, in a word, the confused noise which the body excites in us, to understand without difficulty the responses of the inner Truth. Everyone knows by his own experience that the body is calm enough when nothing is striking it from without or has not already struck it too much. For since the traces and movements it receives from sensible objects are retained for a long time, I claim that the imagination remains polluted and injured when we have been indiscreet enough to become familiar with pleasures. However, the wound will close again, the brain will be healed if we carefully avoid the action of those objects which strike upon the senses. This avoiding can always be done, at least to some degree. In doing this I presuppose the necessary aids. But for our part, let us do what we can. Far from meditating with disgust, we shall find ourselves so well rewarded that we shall not repent of the effort, provided, however, that we observe the rule which I am going to give, without which no matter how much we meditate, we shall never receive a clear view of the Truth as a reward. I do not pretend to explain the art of thinking here, or to give all the rules by which the mind must govern all its steps in the search after Truth. I am treating of ethics, the science necessary to all men. I leave logic apart, for only those are obliged to study logic who wish to be in a condition to discover truth in every sort of subject.

XII. The only rule which I wish people to observe with care is to meditate only on clear ideas or on incontestable experiences. To meditate on confused feelings and on doubtful experiences is a useless effort; it is to contemplate phantoms and to follow error. The immutable and necessary Order, the Divine law is also our law; it must be the primary subject of our meditations. But nothing is more abstract and less sensible than this Order. I claim that Order made sensible and visible by the actions and precepts of Jesus Christ, can also lead us. But in effect this is because the sensible order lifts the mind to knowledge of the intelligible order. For the Word made flesh is only our model in order that we may conform ourselves to Reason, the indispensable model of all intelligent beings, the model on which the first man was formed, the model on which we must be reformed by the seeming folly of faith, which leads us by our senses to our Reason, to the contemplation of our intelligible model.

XIII. Set down upon the earth, man is dependent on it, but this is in order to be raised up. Jesus Christ accommodated Himself to our weakness, but He did so to draw us away from it. Faith speaks to the mind only by way of the body; that is true. But it is in order that man may no longer hear the body, that he may go back into himself, contemplate the true ideas of things, and silence the senses, imagination and passions. It is so that he may begin on earth to make that use of his mind which he will make of it in Heaven, where understanding will succeed faith, where the body will be subject to the mind, where Reason alone will be mistress. For the body speaks to the mind only for the body's own good; this is an essential truth of which we cannot be too convinced.

XIV. Truth and Order consist only in the relations of magnitude and of perfection which things have between each other. But how discover these relations with evidence, when we lack clear ideas? How are we to give each thing the rank appropriate to it, if we esteem nothing except by its relation to ourselves? Certainly, if we take ourselves as the center of the universe (a feeling which the body constantly inspires), all Order is overthrown, all truths change in nature. A torch becomes larger than a star, a fruit more estimable than the health of the state. The earth, which the Astronomers regard as a point in relation to the universe, becomes the universe itself. But this universe is still nothing but a point in relation to our own particular being. In certain moments when the body speaks and the passions are excited, we are ready, if it were possible, to sacrifice ourselves to its glory and its pleasures.

XV. By clear ideas, which I take to be the primary object of those who want to know and love Order, I do not mean only those between which the mind can discover exact and precise relations, as in the case with those ideas which are the object of mathematics, where relations can be expressed by numbers or be made by lines. By clear ideas I mean generally all those which spread some light in the mind of those contemplating them, or those from which we may draw certain consequences. Thus I put on the list of clear ideas, not only the simple ideas, but also truths which contain the relations existing between those ideas. I put in this list common notions, the principles of ethics, in a word, all clear truths, be they such by themselves or by demonstration or even by

infallible authority, though to speak exactly these latter truths are more properly 'certain' than they are 'clear and evident.'

XVI. By incontestable experiences I mean principally the facts taught us by faith, and those of which we are convinced by our inner feeling of what is happening within us. If we should want to be led by the example of others, or evaluate things by the use of opinion, we would always be making mistakes. For nothing is more equivocal and more confusing than the actions of men, and often nothing is more false than what passes for certain with an entire culture. On the other hand, it is completely useless to meditate on what is happening within us, if our intention is to discover our own nature. For we have no idea whatsoever of our soul or of any of its modifications,[6] and we never learn the nature of beings except by contemplating clear ideas which make them known. But we cannot reflect too often on our feelings and inner movements, in order to discover their connections and relations, and the natural or occasional causes which excite them. And this reflecting has infinite consequence for ethics.

XVII. Of all the sciences, knowledge of man is the most necessary to our subject.[7] But it is only an experimental science, resulting from our reflection on what is happening within us. Reflection does not make us know the nature of the two substances of which we are composed. But it does teach us the laws of the union of body and soul, and it also serves to establish the great principles of ethics by which we must govern our conduct.

XVIII. On the other hand, knowledge of God is not the least bit experimental. We discover the nature and attributes of God when we know how to contemplate attentively the vast and immense idea of infinitely perfect Being. For, concerning God, we must evaluate Him only by our clear idea of Him. Most men are not careful about this, but instead evaluate Him in relation to themselves. They make Him similar to themselves in many ways; they consult themselves instead of consulting nothing but the idea of infinitely perfect Being. Thus they deny Him the Divine attributes which are so hard for them to recognize, and attribute to Him wisdom, power and conduct, in a word [attributes characterized by] feelings similar at least in some aspects of those most familiar to themselves. However, knowledge of our duties presupposes knowledge of the Divine attributes, and our conduct cannot be unerring if not based on and governed by that conduct God exhibits in the execution of His designs.

XIX. Knowledge of Order, which is our indispensable law, is compounded from clear ideas and inner feelings. Every man knows that it is more worthy to be just than rich, sovereign or victorious. But not every man sees this by means of a clear idea. Children and the ignorant know quite well when they have done wrong. But it is the secret reproach of Reason which reproves them; and it is not always the case that light enlightens them. For Order, taken speculatively and only insofar as it contains the relations of perfection, enlightens the mind without striking it. But Order, when considered as the law of God, as the law of all minds, considered precisely insofar as it has the force of law (for God loves and invincibly wills that we love Order, i.e., love all things in proportion as they

are lovable); Order, I say, as principle and as natural and necessary rule of all movements of the soul touches, penetrates and convinces the mind without enlightening it. Thus we may see Order by way of a clear idea, but we know it also by feeling. Since God loves Order and constantly impresses on us a love or movement similar to His own, it is therefore necessary that we be instructed by means of the short and unerring path of feeling as to when we are following or abandoning immutable Order.

XX. But we must be careful, for sin, which introduced concupiscence, often makes the path of discerning Order by way of feeling or instinct less than unerring. This is because the secret inspirations of the passions are of the same nature as this inner feeling. For when we act against custom and opinion, we often feel inner reproaches quite similar to those to those made by Reason and Order. Before sin, the inner feeling of reproach was not an equivocal sign, for there was only this feeling which could speak as teacher within. But since sin, the secret inspirations of the passions are not subject to our wills. Thus it is easy to confuse them with the inspirations of the inner Truth, unless the mind is enlightened by some light. This is why there are so many people who in good faith defend abominable errors. A false idea of Religion and of ethics, which agrees with their interests and passions seem to them to be Truth itself. Convinced by that inner feeling which justifies their excesses, they assert their indiscreet and reckless zeal with all the movement of self-love.

XXI. Therefore nothing is more unerring than the light. We cannot dwell too often on clear ideas; and though we may let ourselves be animated by feeling, we must never let ourselves be led by it. We must contemplate Order within ourselves, and only permit feeling to sustain our attention by means of the movement it excites in us. Otherwise our meditations will not be rewarded by a clear view of Truth. Disgust will capture us every time and, being ever inconstant, uncertain and embarrassed, we shall blindly let ourselves be led by our own caprices.

XXII. It is true that when our hearts are corrupt we are hardly in any condition to contemplate Order in ourselves. We only take pleasure in considering the imaginary relations things have to us, and we scorn the real relations they have between themselves. Thus we may love Mathematics, but only because we are honored by doing so, or draw profit from it. Mathematics only examines relations of magnitude, whereas Order consists only of relations of perfection. The evidence of Truth is always agreeable when it does not harm our self-love, but we do not naturally love a light which illuminates our hidden disorders, a light which condemns us, punishes us and covers us with confusion and shame. For Order, the Divine law, is a terrible law, menacing and inexorable. No man can contemplate it without fear and horror during those times when he wills not to obey it in any way. All this is true. But though the heart is corrupt, enlightened self-love can sometimes halt or diminish the movement of the passions. We do not love disorder for its own sake; and we are able to desire our own conversion when we hope thereby to augment our pleasures and make certain our happiness. Finally, I am always presupposing the necessary aids: for

I claim that without the help of Grace, we cannot labor as we must for our conversion, or even have any good thought which could contribute to the healing of our ills.

NOTES

1. See the Clarification of *Search After Truth*, Bk. VI, pt. II, ch. 3. [M.].
2. See *Dialogues on Metaphysics*, 7th dialogue. [M.]
3. See *Search After Truth*, Bk. III, pt. II, and *Dialogues on Metaphysics* (no. 70). [M.].
4. "The *Analogy of Faith* is the correspondence of the several parts of divine revelation in one consistent whole ... the parts of Scripture must be explained according to the tenor of the whole; and, in order to his doing this, the reader must understand the design of the whole .... A prerequisite ... is the simple love of truth for its own sake." *Encyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*. Prepared by M'Clitock and Strong (New York: 1871), Vol. I, p. 213.
5. Descartes' notion of a 'chain of truths' is explained in his *Rules*, and mentioned in the *Discourse*. However, M. modifies that notion, because a 'truth' is sustained by its own evidence. Therefore, our ability to deduce it from a false presupposition or to deduce a falsehood from it, is more indicative of the weakness of our deductive powers than of a break in the 'chain.' See M.'s "Defense against the Accusation of M. de la Ville" in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. XVII, pt. II, pp. 507 ff.
6. See *Search After Truth*, Bk. III, pt. II, ch. 7 and its Clarification (XI). [M.].
7. See *Search After Truth*, Bk. IV, ch. 6, sec. II, on what is experimental and what is *a priori* in ethics, issues discussed in this and the next section.

Chapter Six

> On the freedom of the mind. The great rule is to suspend consent as much as we can. By means of this rule we may avoid error and sin, just as it is by the strength of the mind that we are delivered from ignorance. The freedom of the mind, as well as its strength, is a habit which is fortified by the use we make of it. Examples of the utility of such use in physics, in ethics and in civil life.

I. We cannot discover the truth without the effort of attention, because only the effort of attention has the light as its reward. In order to support and continue the effort of attention, we must have acquired some *strength* of mind and some command over our bodies in order to impose silence on the senses, imagination and passions, as I have just said in the preceding chapter. But no matter how much strength of mind we acquire, we cannot make that effort without pause, constantly. And even if that were possible, there are subjects so obscure that no mind can penetrate them. Thus, in order for man to fall into error, it is not enough that he have a mind strong enough to support the effort required. In addition, we must have another virtue, which I cannot designate better than by the equivocal name of *Freedom* of the mind, by which man always withholds his consent until he is invincibly carried to the giving of it.

II. When we examine a very complex question, and our mind, 'carried' by the weight of *evidence*, finds itself surrounded on all sides by very great difficulties, Reason easily permits us to abandon the effort. But it indispensably requires that we also suspend our consent, and evaluate nothing, when nothing is evident. *To make use of our freedom AS MUCH AS WE CAN*, that is essential and indispensable precept of Logic and of Ethics. We must never believe before evidence obliges us to do so; we must never love what we can without remorse[1] keep ourselves from loving. I am speaking of the reasonable man, the man who is guided only by Reason. For the man of faith, insofar as he is only faithful, has other principles than light and evidence. The man of politics, the citizen, the religious man, the soldier all have their appropriate principles. And it is reasonable that they follow them, even though they may not yet clearly and evidently see how they conform to Reason. But when Faith makes no decision, we must believe nothing but what we see. When custom prescribes nothing, we must follow nothing but Faith and Reason; and no matter what human authority decides, and no matter what custom authorizes, if we clearly and evidently recognize that we are making a mistake, it is better to give up everything else

than to give up Reason. I say 'than Reason,' and not 'than our feelings, imagination or secret inspirations of the passions.' We must be careful here. Also, I speak of that authority which is subject to error, and not the infallible authority of the Church, which can never be found contrary to Reason. For Jesus Christ can never be contrary to Himself, nor the Truth incarnate to the intelligible Truth, nor the master who leads the Church to the universal Reason which enlightens all minds.

III. The *Strength* of the mind is to the search after Truth as the *freedom* of the mind is to the possession of that truth, or at least to infallibility or exemption from error. We discover the Truth by the use we make of the *strength* of our minds, and by the use we make of the *freedom* of our minds we are exempted from error. Since the mind lacks strength and reach, it needs freedom in order to be able to avoid error by suspending consent, and so that the author of its being[2] may not escape responsibility for his own disorder. Freedom makes up for the weakness and limitations of the human mind. A man who is free enough always to suspend his consent, though he may not be delivered from ignorance (a necessary evil for all finite minds), can still be delivered from error and sin which make man deserving of blame and subject to punishment.

IV. It is certain that if we would always make use of our freedom *as much as we can*, we would never consent except to evidence, which alone never errs, as I have proven elsewhere, and which alone obliges the will to give its consent. For when the mind sees clearly, it cannot doubt what it sees. When the mind clearly sees that it has examined everything which needed to be examined in order to discover the relations or truths for which it was searching, then it must necessarily rest and cease its searchings. It is the same concerning sin: a person who only loves what he recognizes by evidence to be a true good, what he cannot refrain from loving, is not the least disordered in his love. He loves only God, because it is only God whom we cannot refrain from loving except by suffering remorse. Only He is clearly and evidently recognized as true good, genuine cause of happiness, infinitely perfect Being, an object capable of giving peace to the soul, which, being made for the universal good, can suspend consent of its love when faced with anything not including these goods, or anything which can limit its happiness.

V. The *strength* and the *freedom* of the mind are, then, two virtues which we may call general or *cardinal*, to make use of the usual phrase. For, since we must never love or act without having thought well about it beforehand, we must make use of both the *strength* and the *freedom* of our minds, every time we act. And these two virtues, as I have considered them, are not natural faculties common to all men. On the contrary, nothing is more rare, and no one possesses them perfectly. I know full well that man is naturally capable of some effort of the mind. But he does not on that account have a free mind in a way I intend it to be understood. The strength and freedom of the mind of which I am speaking are virtues acquired by use. Yet they are not ordinarily regarded as virtues, because they perfect the soul and (to some extent) return it to its natural state (for before sin the mind was strong and free in every way). We imagine

that virtue must change nature or else destroy it, instead of repairing it. There are even some people who think that the strength and freedom of the mind are 'faculties' of the soul, consisting of some sort of indivisibility.[3] Evaluating others by reference to themselves, they imagine that we cannot make ourselves pay attention to those subjects which they find to be repulsive, and we are presumably obstinate if we do not consent to those probabilities by which they are deceived.

VI. But on the contrary, the *strength* and *freedom* of the mind are not equal in men. There are not even two people exactly equal in ability to go back into themselves, or two of exactly equal ability to suspend consent. But what am I saying? Not even the same person can conserve his strength and freedom of mind in exactly the same state over a long period of time. If they are not augmented by our use, they must necessarily diminish. For there are no virtues more opposed by and more contrary to the continual movements of concupiscence. The majority of the virtues are sufficiently accommodated to self-love, because we can often fulfill our duties with pleasure and with self-love. But we can hardly expect to meditate without difficulty, much less to suspend our consent, that judgment which determines the movements of the mind and body. When the good discloses itself to the soul and attracts the soul by its sweetness, the soul is not resting if it remains unmoved by that attraction; for the course of the animal spirits is so violent that the soul usually lets them flow. There is no greater effort than to be firm against a current, where as soon as we cease acting, we are carried off by it.

VII. We also see that almost no one meditates, and that those who do undertake the search after Truth often lack the strength and courage to reach the place where Truth dwells. Fatigued and repulsed, most people try be content with what they have, or perhaps take consolation in scornfully ridiculing themselves, or in despair blamed on cowardice and baseness of spirit. If they are deceived, they become deceivers; and if they are tired, they inspire sloth and idleness. We need only see them in order to feel as they feel, repulsed by the effort of attention and disgusted with the Truth. For men are made so that they much prefer to deceive each other than to consult their common teacher. They are so gullible toward their friends, and so incredulous or so inattentive to responses from the inner Truth, that opinion and faction are the usual rule of their feelings and conduct.

VIII. In order to acquire some freedom of mind and to get accustomed to suspending our consent, we must constantly reflect on men's prejudices and on their causes. We easily believe that we understand things, as soon as we have lost our curiosity about them. Familiarity delivers us from all apprehension and the mind willingly consents, because it has no motive to withhold consent. It is useless to suspend consent if we have no intention of examining anything, for what does it matter if we do make a mistake? It is grand and agreeable to evaluate everything, but by contrast we cannot examine anything without difficulty. In order to examine we must at least take the time. Yet the soul was made to be happy, and it believes time is wasted if pleasure, vanity and interests

are not seducing it. This is why ordinary language is only a perpetual gibberish. For everyone easily believes he either knows what he is saying or what he means to say, once he has said it himself or heard it said several times. Only new terms make for difficulty and awaken our attention. And these new terms, even if they are clear and exempt from equivocation, are always suspect. Everyone is capable of being apprehensive about what people say, but few are capable of sufficient attention to discover the Truth and deliver themselves of that apprehension. I could fill volumes with examples of expressions received everywhere,[4] whose sense is indeterminate and confused. But we must take pleasure in attaching clear ideas to ordinary discourse whenever we can; there are few occupations more agreeable and more suited to delivering us from our prejudices and giving us that freedom of the mind of which I am speaking here.

IX. By the same principle, the majority of men imagine themselves to be sufficiently well-acquainted with the cause of those natural effects which are common. And when asked for their reasons, they believe that we must be satisfied if they reply only with what we already know quite well. The fact is, they believe we must cease our researches as soon as we cease our initial wonder about them, and that we should then consent to everything, provided that there is nothing to fear or to hope for in doing so. How is it that a chick comes out of an egg? Because of the warmth of the hen who kept it covered – that is clear. Nothing is more common; and there the matter rests. How is it that a grain of corn sprouts, pierces down into the earth to spread out its roots, and makes ears to come from itself? It is the rain which does it all; there is nothing special to worry about. Or if you are not happy with these replies, or others like them, those who take themselves to be philosophers will tell you that the **humidity and the warmth**,[5] very clear terms, are the fecund principles of generation and corruption of all things. They will tell you that little animals are begotten from *corruption* and *rottenness*, that the larger ones preserve their species by certain *seminal* or *prolific* virtues, which form and arrange all parts of the fetus. They will also tell you that the sun and moon preside over it all, or perhaps a prime mover which gives movement to all bodies included within itself. These lovely things, or others like them, have been heard by us since childhood, coming from solemn men whom we call teachers. Of course, in order to be docile, we had to believe without examining, to retain and skillfully repeat all of this. Therefore we believed and repeated this nonsense so many times that we can no longer refrain from believing and teaching it to others.

X. If an ox, or some new kind of animal, were to fall from the storm-clouds, all the astonished and curious wits would offer a thousand reflections about the event, which by itself is quite undeserving of their application.[6] But the fact that all animals come from their mothers' wombs in a uniform manner and by infinitely wise laws is too ordinary to be the subject of their reflections and researches. It is *nature* which does these marvels. That great word explains everything. We rest content with it. We do not suspend judgment at all; we believe. But what do we believe? That *nature* makes everything. Nothing is more clear. Shall we doubt, shall we examine things which have been said or

heard thousands of times? And where would that leave us? In a position to meditate? That is too costly. To become a scholar? There is not enough time. Someone asks our advice; therefore we reply and judge.

XI. Where would the atheists and libertines be, if men did some reflecting, not necessarily upon themselves personally, but even on the least-estimable works of God – a leaf, a grain, a gnat?[7] But they have seen marvels since childhood; they were accustomed to them before they were able to think in terms of Order, to reflect, to suspend consent. They have been taught contempt for such things. Thus they are surrounded with admirable works, yet do not perceive them. They themselves are, so to speak, the masterpieces of God's works. Yet they think less about examining what they are, than about any other thing.

XII. But it is even more useful to suspend consent about problems of ethics, than in all else with which we deal. For everything related to more's is very little known and very difficult to know exactly. This is because the principles and the ideas which we have about this subject are obscured by our passions, which mind only concerning those truths affecting us by mind only concerning those truths affecting us but slightly. Thus in problems of ethics we avoid errors almost as many times as we suspend our consent. And these errors are always of some consequence. It is not that we are often obligated to act before having clearly known what we should do. Rather, even though we might have to act, we must never believe before evidence obliges us to do so. Nor would I pretend that we must always remain in doubt. For between doubting and believing there are infinite degrees of difference which have no particular names. We doubt when every possibility is equally probable. We believe when every facet of the problem is evident. But since there are greater and lesser probabilities stretching to infinity, the mind must put each thing in its proper place if it is to be a good judge. Light and evidence must always govern our decisions. For though a principle may not be evident, it might perhaps be evident that the principle is probable. Thus the soul must suspend consent and examine it if time permits. It must regard the principle as probable, and attribute to it that degree of probability which light and evidence give to it. For, in the last analysis, evaluations by the will must not have more reach than the mind's perceptions. We must follow the light step by step, and not run on ahead of it. So long as we continue to evaluate simply because we want to do so, before having been obliged to do so by evidence, such evaluation is subject to error because it comes from a basis in us rather than from the action of God in us. And though by chance it may be just, it is not at all justly reached, because we must make use of our freedom *as much as we can*, as I have already said several times.

XIII. What if a man spent just one year in worldly affairs, hearing all that is said but believing none of it; constantly going back into himself in order to hear whether the truth within him speaks the same language, all the while suspending his consent until the moment light appears! I would consider such a man to be more learned than Aristotle, wiser than Socrates, more enlightened than the Divine Plato. But I would value his ease at meditating and suspending consent

even more highly than all those other virtues of the greatest men of pagan antiquity. For if he cultivated an inner soil which could never be barren, he would have acquired by his efforts more strength and freedom of mind than we could imagine to be possible. What a difference there is between Reason and opinion; between the inner teacher who convinces by evidence, and the men who persuade by use of instinct, gestures, tone, expression and mannerisms; between men whether deceived or mistaken, and eternal Wisdom, the Truth itself. Let those who have not reflected on these things condemn me, and let them begin by renouncing Reason.

XIV. If men would will to suspend their consent regarding those facts about which they cannot be instructed by consulting the inner truth, and concerning which it seems they would have to believe whatever they heard about them, then from how many errors and disturbances might they be delivered by making such a use of freedom? Nothing causes more evil in the world than our opinions things; yet our opinions about people excite infinitely more passions. Backbiting, calumny, and false tales often cause oppression of innocent people, irreconcilable hatreds, and even sometimes fights and bloody wars. Just one word, poorly understood by the speaker and then even more poorly interpreted by the listener, is all that is needed to incite an unsteady person. People do not want to ask for clarification, and even if they do ask for it, others are not always in a mood to give it. What can be done about this? Believe nothing people say, suspend our consent and be reminded of the words of the Wise man: "He that is hasty to believe is light of heart, and should be brought down" [*Ecclesiasticus* 19:4]. For the outstanding characteristic of a petty spirit is casually to believe anything. Do we not know that most men poison the most innocent actions and words, not out of wicked malice, but for sport, for diversion, by that which some call wit, by natural malignity? Should we not have noticed that almost all rumors popular at one time are later found to be false; and that when factious men have a vested interest in a particular man, they can make him famous overnight by distinguishing and transforming him, whether he is honest or dishonest? Let each of us reflect on himself about this. How often have we been whisked along to false and reckless judgments concerning something we have heard said about people we do not like? No matter how careful we are, if we once let ourselves go ahead and believe the evil we hear others speak, then our imagination and passions will not be silent but will have us believing even more. For the imagination and passions never fail to spread over the objects which excite them their own dispositions and their own malignity; just as the senses spread over other bodies those sensible qualities by which they are affected. For otherwise how could the passions justify their outbursts and their injustices? We must not always attribute to others that which we feel in ourselves. And because this defect is so common, whenever someone speaks to us about someone else, we should suspect that he has fallen into it, and that he is telling us not so much the truth, as what he believes to be the truth. From this we see that in order not to err at all in our opinions of others, we must suspend consent and consider what is said of them as only probable. We must beware of

others, and always be on guard against their malignity; prudence requires this. But we must not condemn them within ourselves. We must leave only to God the role of Judge and Scrutinizer of hearts, lest we risk committing a thousand injustices.

XV. To make clearly understood the necessity of working to acquire some freedom of the mind, some facility at suspending the will's consent, we must know that when two or several goods are present in the mind at the same time, and it is deciding about them, it never fails to choose the one which in that moment seems better to it, supposing all other things equal. For since the soul is capable of loving only by means of its natural movement toward the good, it infallibly loves that which, in the moment when it decides, seems to have more conformity with that which it invincibly loves.

XVI. But we must be careful that the soul be always able to suspend consent and not decide, even when it is in the process of deciding, primarily concerning false goods. (I presuppose that the soul's capacity to think is not taken up by too violent feelings or movements.) For in the long run, we can withhold our consent until evidence obliges us to give it. But by evidence we can never see that false goods are true gods, since we never see by evidence something which is not. Thus, though we may not stop ourselves from deciding in favor of the most apparent goods, still, by suspending our consent we can love none but the most solid ones. For we cannot suspend our judgment without arousing our attention. But the attention of the mind makes all vain appearances disappear, and so, too, for the probabilities which seduce the careless, the weak minds, the servile souls given over to pleasure. These people do not fight for the conservation and augmentation of their freedom; not being able to support the effort of examining apparent goods, they imprudently consent to everything which flatters their concupiscence. Therefore nothing is more necessary than freedom of the mind, if we are to love only true goods, live according to Order, obey Reason inviolably, and acquire true and solid virtue. And all occupations which can contribute to giving the mind some facility for suspending consent until the light of Truth should appear, are always very useful to men. For we have a natural inclination to evaluate all things promptly and cavalierly, and consequently we have an extreme penchant for falling into error and disorder.[8]

NOTES

1. See above, ch. 5, sec. XIX re: 'remorse' as the reproach of Reason and thereby a guide to what is lovable.
2. That is, as moral agents we are the authors of the perfection or corruption of our being. God is the Author of our being, we are the authors of our good-being or evil-being. See *Search After Truth*, Bk. IV, ch. 2.
3. Reference may be to Descartes' Fourth *Meditation*, where 'will' is described as indivisible. See *A. T.* VII, p. 60.
4. See *Search After Truth*, Bk. V, chs. 8 & 10.
5. The tone of what follows may imply references to Aristotle's *De gen. et corr.* But it is

closer to Diodorus of Sicily, who claimed that mud from the Nile generated large animals when warmed by the sun. For other examples of the views ridiculed by M., cf. Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, V. 795–796; Bacon, *Nov. Org.*, II, ss. V & XLI; Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 46.

6. Because by supposition it is an isolated instance, outside of science.
7. There is nothing remarkable, or requiring attention, about the existence or structure of leaves, grains and gnats.
8. By contrast to sec. V of this chapter, sec. XVI shows some reasons for agreement between M. and Descartes. Besides the well-known passages of Descartes' *Discourse*, cf. the Letters to Elizabeth of 1 Sept. 1645 and 6 Oct. 1645, in *A. T.* IV., pp. 281–287 and 304–317.

Chapter Seven

> On obedience to Order. Means of acquiring a stable and dominant disposition to obey it. This cannot be done without grace. How much the good use of the mind's strength and freedom contributes to grace: by the light which that usage generates in us, by the contempt it teaches us for our passions, and by the purity it re-establishes and conserves in our imagination.

I. The facility we acquire for making ourselves attentive and for withholding consent until evidence compels us to give it, are both necessary habits for anyone wanting to be solidly virtuous. But solid virtue, virtue in every way accomplished, does not consist only of these two rare and great dispositions of the mind. We must add an exact obedience to the Divine law, a general sensitivity to all our duties, a stable and dominant disposition to govern by known order all the heart's movements, all steps of our conduct. In a word, we must add the love of Order. For what is the use of having enough *strength* and *freedom* of mind to discover the most hidden truths, to avoid the smallest errors, if we do not see according to our lights, if we fight or abandon known truth and withdraw ourselves from the obedience we owe to Order, the law inviolable, eternal and Divine? Certainly this could serve only to make us more criminal and culpable in the eyes of the One who invincibly loves Order and indispensably punishes all disorder.

II. But how acquire this stable and dominant disposition of governing according to known order all the heart's movements and all the steps of our conduct? What we must do is evident from the fourth chapter: acts form habits; thus we must frequently make firm and constant resolutions to obey Order, and to sacrifice all else to it. For by frequently repeating these momentary resolutions and by at least partially carrying them out, little by little we would make an habitual disposition out of them. This is easy enough to conceive, but it is not at all easy to do. For how make this heroic resolution really to sacrifice our dominant passion to Divine law? Certainly this is not possible without the aid of grace. A man without grace can take his own life; he can desire to go back into nothingness. Yet nothing is not as terrible as that desolate condition of living without that which we love. Nothingness is a condition between happiness and misery. Thus, when we are unhappy and desperate in our misery, we can wish not to be. But we cannot wish to be unhappy because we invincibly wish to be happy.[1] Without a firm faith and the hope of finding some happiness more solid

than that left behind, no matter how enlightened our self-love may be, it cannot by itself make a resolution to sacrifice its dominant passion. This cannot be contested.

III. Now such faith and hope are gifts of God for several reasons. It seems to me that the chief reason is that, by nature alone, it is not possible for a man constantly dissipated by objects flattering his senses and exciting his passions really to take it upon himself to examine the truths of religion with as much attention and perseverance as is needed. He would need to attend and persevere in order to convince himself fully of those truths and submit himself to them, and he could not make such an effort unless God by a special grace had made him find some delight in this sort of effort. However, since we can use nature to serve grace in a thousand ways, it is a principle of enlightened self-love that we must make the effort to go back in to ourselves, affirm our faith and augment our hope. I must explain these truths somewhat further.

IV. We all invincibly will to be happy, but with a solid and durable happiness. None of us wants to be deceived, and especially not about something of such great consequence as our eternal salvation. Thus everyone who has acquired some *strength* and *freedom* of mind, even everyone not yet so given over to sin and subservient to temporary pleasures as no longer to be able to reflect about the path he is following in life, should and can assure himself once and for all whether or not his being is immortal, whether there is a jealous and inexorable God, whether Order is an inviolable law, and whether all action conforming to or contrary to that law will infallibly be rewarded or punished. Enlightened self-love, the desire to be solidly happy is doubtless itself a grace sufficient to move us toward an examination of the truths of Religion. We are able to deprive ourselves of a slight pleasure for a moment or two, in order to search for the enjoyment of a solid and genuine pleasure. Nothing is more reasonable and conformable to enlightened self-love than to will to cease being momentarily happy in order to be solidly happy throughout all eternity.

V. That the Gospel has been announced to man in no way depended on man. It is not up to man to get into a conversation or pick up a book which turns out to convince and convert him. Rather, those sorts of eventuality would be up to the favorable circumstances of grace and his condition at the time. But it is up to man, or has been up to man, to conserve his strength and freedom of mind and not let his imagination be corrupted such that even if grace were given him, it would be fruitless. For if his imagination is corrupted, then delight in true goods spiritual delight will just barely be felt because of the abundance, vivacity and strength of the sensible pleasures which disturb and captivate it. For as I have said elsewhere,[2] it is by means of spiritual delight that the truths of religion vividly strike the mind. Without it we read Scripture as the Jews, with a veil over our eyes. The preacher speaks to the ears; miracles and prodigies astonish our senses; but God does not speak to the heart. Rather, it is attention which is the natural cause of light. But ordinarily our attention is dissipated as soon as pleasure ceases. At least this is true of that favorable sort of attention which makes the light agreeable to us, and makes us love it. That sort of

attention prepares the soul for movement toward the good, because pleasure is the natural character of the good and the soul always invincibly wills to be happy.

VI. However, since we will to be solidly happy, we are able to give up some false pleasures, even if they are present, for the sake of solid pleasures, even though they may be in the future. We can search for the latter instead of the former, if hope and fear of the future incite us. Present pleasure is not always absolute master of the heart. Experience teaches us these truths, for we often give up a slight pleasure when we have hope of possessing a more solid one. But since we invincibly will to be happy, and happy here and now, we cannot long resist the immediately present and continuous attraction of sensible pleasures, no matter how much strength and freedom of mind we might have acquired. We cannot will to be restored to happiness after death, for to our imagination death seems a genuine annihilation. I speak of imagination which, always without grace (and often even with grace)[3] is (still) mistress of our reason, governor of our passions and inner principle of all the great movements which shake the soul. Thus we readily see that, on the one hand, anyone who sins and does not work to conserve the strength and freedom of his mind merits punishment. And on the other hand, we see that law and the most enlightened philosophy cannot give to a soul weakened and corrupted by original sin sufficient strength and health to walk the path which leads to happiness. St. Paul made this clear throughout his Epistle to the Romans.

VII. Therefore since we are capable of reason and of happiness, we must make use of all the strength and freedom of mind remaining to us in order to become instructed in that which can augment our faith and fortify our hope. For it is by faith and hope that we can reach our happiness, and without them I have just shown that it is not even possible to make a plan to sacrifice our dominant passion. For what would that mean? To sacrifice our dominant passion in order to become happy would seem to be self-contradictory. At the least it is startling and repulsive. True – but only while passion has its charms. Therefore they must be taken from it. I do not presume that we could sacrifice it while it is disguised with all its ornaments. On the contrary, since we do not want to be deceived and since we do want to be solidly happy, I presume that we should try to recognize it as it is, discover within it the ridicule which would arouse our contempt for it and the derangement which would horrify us once discovered. I presume that we should and can get our minds into such a condition, by the strength of our hope and faith, that with the aid of grace our minds could make this sacrifice with pleasure, or at least with gladness, though the sacrifice had seemed so terrible. Moreover, it is a necessity either that we perish without resources and in spite of our supposed riches, or that we throw them overboard in order to reach port happily where we shall find solid goods, goods no longer subject to tempests and storms.

VIII. In order to do that, we must study man; we must know ourselves, our dignity and weaknesses, our perfections and inclinations (and become well convinced of the immortality of our being).[4] We must carefully examine the

difference between the two parts of which man is composed, and the admirable laws of their union. From there we ascend to the Author of these laws, the genuine cause of all that happens in us and in the objects around us. We contemplate God in the attributes which constitute the vast and immense idea of infinitely perfect Being, and no longer do we judge of it by reference to ourselves. If we need help in sustaining our mind's gaze on so abstract and profound a subject, we find that help in the visible efforts of the universal cause. Above all, we must examine the relationships between God's conduct and the Divine attributes, and recognize how that conduct must necessarily be the rule for our conduct. Finally we penetrate His eternal designs, and at least recognize that He is the end of His work and that immutable Order is His law (and ours). We return to ourselves, compare ourselves to Order and recognize our total corruption. We feel base and unworthy inclinations, and are left in confusion. We condemn ourselves as criminals, as enemies of our God, not entering in to His designs or obeying His law but constantly obeying the shameful law of the flesh and of blood. Humble and trembling before a God jealous of His glory and avenger of crimes, we fear death and the flames, His just and terrible vengeance. We eagerly search for a mediator, and at last find Jesus Christ, only Son of God, victim on the cross for the world's sins, now sitting at the right hand of the living God and made Lord of all things, consecrated sovereign Priest of true goods. Once put to death as a criminal near Jerusalem, today He is in the Temple, in the Holy of Holies, before His Father's face, ever living to intercede for sinners and to shower them with blessings and grace. But in the end He will be their inexorable judge on the day of the Lord's vengeance, eternal day to end all time, and He will rule forever the good and the evil.[5]

IX. Can we think on these great truths, be convinced of them by frequent meditation and still find our passions ever the same? Can the pageant of the senses and the charms which accompany them bear the vivid and penetrating light which spreads over the mind when we think about death, hell, the future world, that heavenly Jerusalem illuminated by God's own splendor and surrounded by the torrent of sensible pleasures? (When we realize that eternal enjoyment of Divinity itself is at stake here, and that we know full well that the Divine substance alone is the life and sustenance of the spirit; when at last we think about the *outer darkness* with which Jesus Christ threatens us, eternal shadows full of horrors for all those who know what awaits them there; then)[6] certainly just the thought of death changes the look of everything for those who have any remaining feeling, any strength and freedom of mind. The inevitable alternative of two such contrary eternities following the last moments of time shatters all the plans and erases all the ideas presented to us by the passions. How could the passions even justify their excesses and derangement during such a time of reflection?

X. And what if we added to the truths reason discovers when led by faith those other truths which reason alone learns, of the difference between the soul and the body, and the laws of union of these two substances? We would visibly

recognize the malignity of the passions, and more easily scorn their flattering caresses which invincibly seduce weak minds. For when we finally and seriously reflect on the workings of our machine, we sometimes prefer to lead it than to be carried away by it. And when we are fully convinced that the glitter and charms of sensible objects uniquely depend on the way they are made to appear by the fermentation of the humors and the blood, then our desire to be solidly happy guides our thoughts elsewhere, and sometimes spreads disgust and horror over those vain objects. Doubtless they are vain and contemptible, since their glitter ceases as soon as the fermentation diminishes or the blood's circulation furnishes the brain with new spirits. They are vain for a thousand other reasons, and no purpose is served by enumerating all of them. They pass away, and that is the point. But they pass away in such a fashion that they take with them and lose for all eternity whoever attaches himself to them.

XI. Therefore let everyone examine his own dominant passion by the principles which the true Philosophy furnishes, and by the truths of faith, of which he should have been convinced by using well both grace and his own freedom. For nothing is more reasonable than Religion, though we need help to understand it fully and submit ourselves to it. I say, let everyone examine by the light of Reason and of faith the passion which hold him captive, and he will at least find in himself some desire to be delivered from its tyranny. Little by little the charms which enchanted him will be dissipated. He will become ashamed of himself for having been so lazy in letting himself be seduced. And if the fermentation of the blood and humors ceases for awhile, and the animal spirits change their course, he will find himself in such a condition of chagrin against the object of his inclinations that he will no longer be able to put up with its presence.

XII. However, let us never cease keeping a watch on ourselves, defending ourselves against passion's forces, and meditating on subjects which render the passions ridiculous and contemptible. For we must not imagine ourselves free of them just because we are not abused by them at a particular time. The imagination long remains soiled by the impression of a passion which has reigned over it. The wounds which the brain has received by the action of objects upon it and by the movement of the spirits, are not easily healed. Since the animal spirits naturally pass through the most open or exposed places in the brain along their route, it is impossible that the imagination's wounds could be healed unless we constantly detour from their route the spirits which renew those wounds. It is impossible to close a wound if we keep breaking it open with the dagger which made it, or with something else which renews and aggravates it.

XIII. But the spirits do not just go by themselves or by chance to the wounds which the brain has received from the action of sensible objects. They are constantly determined to go that way by the pleasures the soul receives from their doing so, and especially by the admirable construction of the machine which works in its own way without waiting for orders from the will, and often, because of sin, even works against its orders. Therefore as soon as we cease

resisting and diverting the course of the spirits, the passions are renewed and fortified. Now there is no way to bring about diversion and revulsion in the spirits except to put ourselves in the presence of objects and occupy ourselves with objects and occupy ourselves with thoughts with thoughts to which different routes for animal spirits are connected by the laws of body-soul union. In the passions, the route of the spirit does not immediately depend upon our wills. Rather, it depends on our wills only if the thoughts which determine the spirits' movements themselves depend on our wills. Thus we cannot possibly be delivered from our passions unless we carefully avoid the objects which excite them and occupy our minds only with thoughts suited to rendering them ridiculous and contemptible. But I shall explain this more carefully in what follows.[7]

XIV. In order that we might further reflect on the truths I have just discussed, I believe I should particularly say that neither prayer nor good works nor even the grace of Jesus Christ can heal the wounds which the brain receives from the violent and deranged movement excited in the spirits by the passions. Even the most sublime grace of Jesus Christ, that of baptism, which receives a soul communing with the most holy dispositions, cannot heal these sorts of evil without a miracle. It is true that the grace of justification gives us a right to those aids needed to resist the immediate efforts of the passions. But it does not deliver us from their attacks, because it does not close up the wounds the brain has received from the action of sensible objects. God does not perform miracles on our bodies when He justifies us; He knows us with all our weaknesses. Baptism does not deliver us from our concupiscence. And the new Christian who is uncomfortable from the gout or restless from some passion will not find himself healed of these troublesome evils. He receives only those aids needed to endure patiently the pain which abuses him, and to endure impatiently but bravely the caresses of passion which tempt and cajole him.

XV. We must say almost the same thing concerning prayers and good works. They obtain from God those aids needed for the battle, but do not deliver us from our misery unless by strength of combat and resisting we should naturally make the spirits take another route so that our wounds would be healed and closed. In order to heal the wounds of the brain, just as with those of other parts of our bodies, it is sufficient that nothing prevent the separated fibers from being rejoined.

XVI. The reason why grace does not deliver us from our passions or Baptism from the continuous efforts of our concupiscence, is that the power of the grace of Jesus Christ appears to a greater extent in the continual victories of the just over their domestic enemies. The merit of the saints thereby becomes more pure and greater. Finally, since glory is related to merit, the holy city, the eternal temple, the great work of Jesus Christ thereby receives thousands and thousands of beautiful contributions which it would never have received if our passions did not constantly provide us with thousands and thousands of battles. St. Paul was just; but in his flesh he felt a law opposed to that of the spirit which animated it. He often asked Jesus Christ to deliver him from that which, writing

to the Corinthians [*II Corin.*12, 7 & 9–10], he called *a thorn in his flesh.* But Jesus Christ replied to him, *my grace should be sufficient for you; for it is in weaknesses that my power should appear, and virtue be purified.* St. Paul was glorified in infirmities, persecutions and outrages, *in order*, he says, *that the power of Jesus Christ might dwell in me.*

XVII. Therefore let us not be surprised if the Sacraments should leave the body as they found it, and fortify only the inner man of which we have no perfect knowledge. And let us not despair at seeing ourselves always insulted and mistreated by criminal passions, provided that we remain always firm in our faith, content with its hopes, and thereby unshakable in our resolution to sacrifice all things to God. If we want it (as we should, since we should always avoid danger), if we want to be delivered, I say, from the troublesome movements excited by the passions, we absolutely must make use of the remedy I have just explained. We must carefully avoid objects which arouse them, and fill our minds with thoughts which make for diversion and revulsion in the spirits. In a word, we must render the passions ridiculous and contemptible; there is no other way to be delivered from them. But as for those who, out of a philosophical spirit or the movement of enlightened self-love condemn the passions as criminals, let them not therefore imagine themselves to be already just in the eyes of God and already much preferred over their fellow men. But let us always remember that nature does not justify, and that grace often works in minds and converts them without our perceiving any sensible change. (For here I speak only of those inner dispositions which depend upon those of our bodies.)[8]

NOTES

1. Cf. Pascal's *Pensées*, Brunschvicg 425 (Lafuma #370).
2. E.g., *Christian Meditations*, XIV.
3. Added in 1697.
4. Parenthetical passage was omitted after 1697.
5. Cf. Bérulle, *Opuscules de Piété* CXXV, éd. Roturean (Paris, 1944), pp. 375–377.
6. Added in 1707.
7. See especially I/13.
8. Parenthetical comment added in 1707. Cf. *Search After Truth* V/4 & 8.

Chapter Eight

On the means furnished by religion for acquiring the love of Order. Jesus Christ is the occasional cause of grace. We must call upon Him with confidence. When we approach the Sacraments, our momentary love of Order is changed into habitual love, because of the permanent desires of Jesus Christ. Proof of this truth essential to the conversion of sinners. Fear of hell as good a motive as the desire for eternal felicity. We must not confuse the motive with the end. The desire to be happy, or self-love, must make us conform to Order, or subject ourselves to the Divine law.

I. We can acquire and conserve virtue or the love of Order only by momentary individual resolutions to sacrifice all things to it. For these are the acts which naturally produce and conserve habits. We cannot form a resolution to sacrifice our dominant passions without a lively faith and a firm hope, especially when passion appears with all its charms and attractions. Thus, since the light illumines faith, since it affirms hope and makes the ridiculousness and disorder of the passions appear to the mind, we must constantly meditate upon true goods, search out and conserve clearly in our memory those motives which can carry us to the love of true goods and the contempt of those who pass away. And we must do this all the more carefully since the light is subject to our wills; if we live in darkness, it is nearly always our fault. I believe I have sufficiently proved these truths.

II. But when faith is not lively enough or hope firm enough to make us resolve to sacrifice a passion which has made itself mistress over our heart, when that passion always corrupts our mind in its favor, then all that we must and can do is to search in the fear of hell for that which we do not find in the hope for eternal felicity. Then, in the movement which fear inspires, we can pray with ardor to the Savior of sinners, that He might augment our faith and confidence in Him; then we can constantly meditate on the truths of religion and ethics, and on the variety of those goods which pass away. For without that motivation, we do not think of our misery or invoke our Liberator. Finally, when we feel within ourselves enough strength to form momentarily the resolution to sacrifice our passions to the love of Order, then even though according to the principles established in the preceding chapters we may be able theoretically to repeat similar acts, and, by the aid of grace acquire charity or the habitual and dominant love of immutable Order, still it is better to approach

the Sacraments without delay, and by means of this momentary movement of Love of Order which the Holy Spirit inspires in us, come to wash away our sins by penitence. Assuredly this is the shortest path, and the most sure for changing an act into a habit, that is, for changing the act which passes away without converting us, into the habit which remains and justifies us. For God does not judge souls by that which is momentary and passes away, but by their habitual and permanent dispositions. And by the Sacraments of the new law, we receive justifying grace, habitual charity which gives us a right to true goods and to the aids necessary to obtain them. These then are the truths which I must now explain by way of certain principles, by evidence and by faith.

III. I believe I have already demonstrated elsewhere,[1] and in several ways, that God always executes His designs by general laws, whose efficacy is determined by the action of occasional causes. I have proved this truth by the effects whose second causes are known to us, and I believe I have demonstrated it by the idea of God taken by itself, because His action must bear the mark of His attributes. On this matter the reader may refer to my other writings. But if reason could not lead us to this truth, holy Scripture would not permit us to doubt it with reference to the subject treated here. It teaches us that Jesus Christ as man is not only the **meretricious** cause, but also the distributive or **occasional** cause of all graces. For by His merits and sacrifice, Jesus Christ acquired a right over all the nations of the earth: they are to serve Him as material for the construction of the spiritual Temple of the Church, of which the superb Temple of Solomon was only the shadow and figure. Today, and since the day of His Ascension, He makes full use of that right, raising the eternal Temple to the glory of His Father.

Jesus Christ is the *Head* of the Church [*Eph.* 4:15–16]. He constantly imparts to its members the spirit which gives it life and sanctity. He is the *Advocate* [*I John* 2:1], the *Mediator* [*I Tim.* 2:5], the *Savior* of sinners [*Eph.* 5:23]. He is our *Sovereign Priest* [*Heb.* 7:26]. He is in the Holy of Holies, *always living to INTERCEDE for us* [*Heb.* 7:25], and all His *prayers*, or His desires are granted [*John* 11:42]. In a word, Jesus Christ Himself teaches us *that all power has been given to Him in Heaven and on earth.* [*Matt.* 28:18, *John* 13:3] Now He has not received this power as God equal to the Father, but insofar as He is a man resembling ourselves; and God does not communicate His power to creatures except by executing their acts of will, thereby executing His own designs [*Heb.* 5:10]. For God alone is the genuine cause of everything which is done in grace as well as in nature. Therefore, according to Holy Scripture, it is certain that Jesus Christ as man is the *occasional* cause which determines by His prayers or desires the efficacy of the general law by which God wills to save all men in His Son, and by His Son. (For again, *no one comes to the Father but by the Son.* [*John* 14:6] If it is certain, as Jesus Christ said to the Apostles, *that it is He who has chosen them* [*John* 15:16], and again, that it is *His Father who has given them to Him* [*John* 17:6]; if it is true, in a word, that Jesus Christ is the true Solomon who is to build the eternal Temple of which we are the living stones, then we cannot deny that He is the occasional cause of

grace. For that is precisely the idea which the word 'occasional' awakens in the minds of those for whom I am writing.)[2]

IV. It is necessary to be fully convinced of this truth so essential to Religion, by reading the New Testament and primarily the Epistle to the Hebrews. Since I believe I have sufficiently proved this in the *Treatise on Nature and Grace* and the *Christian Meditations*, I shall not delay any longer over it. I am writing for philosophers, but for Christian philosophers who accept scripture and the infallible tradition of the universal Church; and I am trying to explain the truths of faith by the use of clear terms, exempt from equivocation. It is for this reason that I say that Jesus Christ as man is Sovereign Priest of true goods and occasional cause of Grace. I could have said *natural, instrumental, second* or *distributive* cause, or make use of some more common term. But the most well-known terms are not always the most clear. Though we believe we understand them well, we no longer know what we are saying when we utter them. And if we wanted to take the trouble to examine these terms, which I could have used, we would easily see that *natural* cause awakens a false idea, that *instrumental* is obscure, that *second* is so general that it says nothing distinctly in the mind, and that *distributive* is, to say the least, equivocal and confused. But as for the phrase, *occasional* cause of grace, it seems to me that there are no defects, or at least not for those persons for whom alone I have written the *Treatise on Nature and Grace*. Nevertheless, several others have wanted to judge that work, though not having very much understanding of the principles I have supposed.[3] But this term precisely denotes that God, who does all things as veritable cause (as I believe I have demonstrated in several other places), gives His grace only by way of Jesus Christ, the victim impaled on the cross, now purified and consummated in God, now Sovereign Priest of future goods, Head of the Church, Architect of the eternal Temple. He makes the general law of the order of grace clearly understood, – that God will to save all men in His Son and by His Son, – a truth which St. Paul always repeated as being the foundation of the Religion we profess. Perhaps the correct word for clearly expressing that which faith teaches us about Jesus Christ has escaped me. But let no one worry himself about me; I am docile. I shall never angrily or obstinately dispute over terms. As soon as someone gives me better ones, I shall make use of them. But let others be on their guard: I esteem those terms to be 'better' which are the most clear. Words are invented only to express thoughts; therefore those which express our ideas most distinctly are preferable to all others. This is particularly true when one speaks, as I do here, with the design of explaining and clearly proving those truths which even the philosophers do not conceive too well.

V. Beyond that, I pray that justice be done toward me, or that others extend to me the charity of believing that I do not now awaken certain ideas out of resentment against anyone, nor out of a desire to justify my own feelings or methods. I believe that those who have not rendered justice to me have no design of offending me, and that if they have judged a bit quickly about my opinions concerning those terms which they have not understood, it is their love for Religion which has tempted them to do so. Such a love cannot be too great,

and it is difficult to hold back when it is as ardent as I have recognized it to be in some of my adversaries. But – pardon me for this digression. I resume:

VI. God never acts without reason, and there are only two general reasons which determine Him to act: Order, which is His inviolable law, and the general laws which He has established and constantly follows so that His conduct might bear the mark of His attributes. Thus, since nothing happens in creatures except what God does in them, and since the immutable Order of justice does not require God to do good for them, a sinner cannot obtain anything, especially grace, unless he has recourse to the *occasional* cause which determines the *genuine* cause to communicate it to them. Therefore one sort of necessity is that we must distinctly know precisely what this occasional cause is, in order to approach it with confidence and obtain from it those aids without which (as I have shown) it is not possible for us, all by ourselves, to make the resolution to sacrifice our dominant passion to God's laws.

VII. When a sick man fears death and is fully convinced that only one certain fruit can restore his health, fear is sufficient for him to make an effort to get that fruit. The first man was immortal only because he knew that the fruit of the tree of life conserved vigor and gave immortality, and that it was in his power to be sustained by it. Thus when we fear hell, and distinctly know that Jesus Christ is the tree of life, whose fruit gives immortality; or – to speak clearly and without equivocation to the philosophers – when we know that Jesus Christ is the *occasional* cause of Grace, the momentary fear of eternal death suffices for us to invoke Him so that, in response to us, He may form desires which then determine God as genuine cause to deliver us from evil.

VIII. Now once again (for we cannot impress this truth often upon our minds), Jesus Christ as man is alone the occasional cause of Grace, and it is even more certain and sure that His desires or His prayers influence the mind which quickens us than it is sure that the sun will spread its light tomorrow or that fire will give warmth and movement. The fire held back from the bodies of the martyrs; the sun is often eclipsed, and night leaves us in the dark. But Jesus Christ has never prayed in vain. If, before consummating the sacrifice by which He earned the glory He presently possesses, Jesus Christ spoke to His Father saying, *And I know, Father, that Thou hearest Me always* [*John* 11:42], then surely today, when He is entered by His Blood into the Holy of Holies and is established Sovereign Priest of genuine goods, it would be quite faithless to lack confidence in Him. But, it might be said, fire communicates warmth by the necessity of natural laws, and we cannot approach it without feeling its action time and again, whereas on the contrary it is up to Jesus Christ to pay for those who invoke Him. This distinction is real. But what! Shall we doubt the goodness of Jesus Christ? Shall we forget that (since His birth) he has taken on the quality of *Savior* of sinners [*Matt.* 1:21]? *Thou shalt call Him Jesus*, says the Angel to St. Joseph, *for He shall deliver His people from their sins.* Shall we distrust the promises He made to us so many places in the Gospels? Let us recall that in Him we have a *Pontiff who has suffered our evils and who bore our weakness* [*Heb.* 4:15–16]; that He wishes nothing more than to achieve His

great work, the eternal Temple of which we are the living stones [*I Peter* 2:5]; and that He Himself says, *All is joy in Heaven, when a sinner is converted [Luke* 15:10]; and that in these thoughts we confidently approach the *throne of His grace* [*Heb.* 4:16], *the true mercy seat* [*Romans* 3:25], which God established in His person. Let us but ask, we shall receive; let us seek, we shall find. Let us knock, and in the end we shall be free to enter [*Matt.* 7:7; *Luke* 11:9]. *Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved* [*Romans* 10:13]. The Scripture teaches us these truths.

IX. Suppose, then, that we fear the terrible judgments of the living God, believe in Jesus Christ, and call upon Him as our Savior; and suppose that at last we receive from Him enough strength to make this heroic resolution to renounce our dominant passion completely, and that this resolution includes our own momentary love of justice if we really hate sin, since to hate disorder is to love order. What we must do in this condition is to come without hesitation, and throw ourselves at the feet of the Priest in order to receive by the Sacrament of penitence the absolution of our sins and that justifying charity which sinners receive from the Sacrament, when they approach it by means of the movement inspired by the Holy Spirit even if it does not yet dwell in them. Here is the proof of that which I am advancing:

X. After His resurrection, Jesus Christ appeared to His Apostles and said to them: *Peace be with you; as My Father sent Me, so too I send you. And having said these words, He breathed on them, and said to them: Receive the Holy Spirit. Sins will be pardoned of those to whom you shall pardon them*, etc. [*John* 20:19–23] From this it is clear, first, that the Apostles and consequently the Priests have the power to remit sins; that can hardly be contested. In the second place, it is clear that this sacrament (and all those of the new covenant, for other reasons than those which I am now giving) confer justifying charity, the habitual and dominant love of immutable Order.

Since God does not judge a soul by what He knows to be momentary in it, but rather by its stable dispositions and permanent habits, therefore momentary love of Order does not justify, but only habitual love. For God, who invincibly loves Order, cannot love a disordered heart, a heart more disposed to evil than to good. Now, the Priest has the power to remit sins. Hence he has the power to make the sinner agreeable to God. His absolution changes an act into a habit, a permanent disposition. The Priest cannot judge the condition of the penitent, but only his momentary resolution. He can judge the penitent only by the penitent's declaration to him. The penitent himself is the only one to know if his love for Order is habitual or not. But we can only judge of ourselves by our inner feelings. These feelings represent only acts we momentarily feel, and not habits (except as habits are excited into action). (The Priest having the power to absolve, and not being able to form his judgment except by the known dispositions of the penitent, of necessity it must be the case that absolution changes an act into a habit, since only a habit justifies us before God and the Sacraments of the new covenant distribute justifying graces.)[4]

XI. From this it is obviously a very pernicious error to believe that the

Priest's absolution only saves the penitent from eternal punishment due to sin. For, having no other means for morally recognizing whether or not a penitent is just in God's eyes, the Priest could never be assured that he remits sin, nor the penitent that he had received absolution, unless the Sacrament was changing the act or momentary resolution of which we have an inner feeling, into an habitual disposition which cannot be felt. But, moreover, is it really having the power to remit sins, if the sinner is left in that death which is sin, and good is done only for the just; if sins are remitted only for those whose sins have already been remitted in Heaven? Thus it is necessary that there was in Jesus Christ a permanent and efficacious desire, in consequence of the power given to Him by God when He established Him occasional cause of grace, that the condition (or habit) of the penitent change by the Priest's absolution, and that the penitent be delivered from the blame for sin, as well as from the eternal punishment which is its due.

XII. Certainly when we compare the two covenants between God and men in order to discover the relations between them, when we compare the goods promised by the law with those earned for us by Jesus Christ and of which He is the dispenser, we see quite easily that just as by His promises the Author of the law gave us a right to temporal goods, so too Jesus Christ as mediator of the new covenant must also give us a right to true goods, to eternal goods. Thus our Sacraments must actuate grace or justifying charity in those who receive them; for grace alone gives us a right to these true goods. For it is certain that God, who loves Order, cannot give Heaven to those more disposed to evil than to good, to those who are momentarily in disorder. Beyond that, the Council of Trent has defined what I have just established. It is an article of our faith that the Sacraments of the new covenant actuate grace or justifying charity,[5] and that the sinner who approaches the Sacrament of penitence by a movement inspired in him by the Holy Spirit is not justified by that movement, because the Holy Spirit does not yet dwell in him, as the Council says.[6] For the reasons I have just given, the sinner, I say, really receives the habitual charity of justification by the efficacy of the Sacrament which the Savior of sinners established, to deliver them safely from the captivity of sin.

XIII. Thus it is evident that the contrite sinner, by whatever motive it might have been (for it makes no difference so long as he feels himself moved to repent, and so long as he has obtained, by his prayers or otherwise, enough strength to form the courageous resolution no longer to sin, and to renounce his dominant passion), must promptly have recourse to penitence, to receive by that Sacrament the habitual charity which he might not have been able to obtain either by ordinary prayers or by repeated acts of love of Order.

XIV. I know full well that some people condemn fear of hell as a motive of self-love on the grounds that it cannot produce anything good. Nevertheless, it is a motive which I have taken as being the liveliest and most ordinary for exciting us to do those things which can lead us to justification. I know, I say, that they reject this motive as useless, and that they approve, on the contrary, of the hope of eternal reward as a holy and reasonable motive by which most good

people are animated toward virtue, according to these words of David, always so full of ardor and charity: "I devote myself to obeying your statues – compensation enough for ever!" [*Psalms* 118:112]. However, to will to be happy is the same thing as not to will to be happy. The one is no less good than the other. The fear of pain and the desire for pleasure are, both of them, only movements of self-love. But self-love, by itself, is not bad. God constantly produces it in us. It carries us invincibly toward the good; and by the same movement, it invincibly carries us away from evil. We cannot prevent ourselves from willing to be happy, and consequently willing not to be unhappy. Thus the fear of hell or hope of paradise are two equal motives, one as good as the other. If the motive of fear has the advantage over the other, that is because it is more lively, stronger, more efficacious; because ordinarily, other things being equal, we fear pain more than we want pleasures. Everyone is able to consult himself on this matter. And let no one say that eternal reward includes the sight of God, and that therefore the hope of reward is the better of the two. For the same may be said of fear, that is, hell excludes the sight of God, and the fear of not possessing God is the same thing as the desire or hope of possessing Him. Thus, however we compare pain to pleasure, God lost to God possessed, fear is as good as desire or hope. But, moreover, the fear of eternal punishment has this advantage: it can awaken the most dull and the most stupid. This is why Scripture and the Fathers always make use of this motive. Finally, we must be careful here: it is not the motive which governs the heart, but the love of Order. (Nothing makes us just except the love of essential and primitive justice, conforming of the will with divine law. The desire to be happy and the fear of hell are natural and necessary. They are physically good motives; but morally they are neither good nor malicious in themselves.)[7] Every motive is naturally and necessarily based on self-love, on our invincible desire to be happy – where I mean solidly happy. Every motive is based on the movement God constantly impresses upon us toward happiness and the perfection of our being. In a word, every motive is based on self-will, for we can only love by way of our own will. And even a person who might burn with ardor for the joy of God's presence in order to contemplate His perfections and take part in the felicity of the Saints, would still forever be deserving of hell if he had a disordered heart and refused to sacrifice his dominant passion to Order. (For we must love God as He is: both just and powerful.)[7] And, on the other hand, anyone who would like to be indifferent, if that could happen, towards eternal happiness, but who is all the while full of charity, or full of love of Order which includes charity as the love of God above all things, would be just and solidly virtuous. For, as I have already proved at considerable length, true virtue, conformity with God's will consists precisely in habitual and dominant love of the eternal and divine law, immutable Order.

XV.[8] There is a difference between the motives and the end, as there is between effects and their causes. We are excited by motives to act toward the end. By making Himself known, by making Himself tasted, God makes Himself loved. God is the end, and His action in us is the motive of our love. The sight

of divine perfections is the motive for love as-benevolence, as-complaisance. And the taste of divine goods is the motive for love as-union. But take away from the mind all self-love, all desire to be happy and perfect; let nothing be pleasing to it, the perfections no longer affecting it, and here doubtless you will have a person incapable of any love. If nothing can be pleasing to a person, how can he be pleased with God? If the beauty of Order does not affect him, how could he love it? It is true that he could prefer God above all other beings; but that would only be a speculative judgment, one of pure esteem. All concupiscence presupposes self-love, and according to St. Augustine, charity is a *holy* concupiscence.[9] We are not forbidden to will to be happy, for in that case the commandment would be impossible. But we are forbidden to love any creature, no matter what it might be, as our end, which means as cause of our perfection or happiness. Anyone who knows himself and other created beings well, clearly sees that God alone is lovable in that way. And no matter how often the desire to be happy might make us trace the cause of our happiness back to ourselves, or however far the pleasures with which God has adorned the saints in heaven might be able to make them love themselves more than God, it is still a fact that what God has done makes them forget themselves and happily lose themselves in divinity. For love transforms, so to speak, the person who loves according to the object he loves, according to the One who makes all our felicity. This is because, in effect, felicity is worth more than being. For being is a condition between good being and evil being. It is a condition of the self, quite indifferent to the will, for the will either love or does not hate being only insofar as it either is or can be good or evil. There is no man whosoever who would not love more not to be at all than to suffer pains eternally without ever having the slightest consolation, and this holds no matter how slight those pains might be. Thus we easily forget our being, in order to occupy ourselves with nothing but that which makes for good being, that the enjoyment of which makes all our felicity.

XVI. Thus we must love God, not only more than the present life, but more than our own being. Order requires that it be so. But we can only be excited to this love by way of the natural and invincible love which we have for the happiness and perfection of our own being. We cannot find our happiness and perfection outside ourselves. We can only find them in God, since only God is capable of acting in us and making us happy and perfect. Moreover, it is better not to be, than to be unhappy. It is better not to be, than to be evil in the sight of God. Therefore we must love God more than ourselves, and render exact obedience to Him. It is the ultimate of crimes to place our end in our selves. That was the folly of the Stoic's Sage, for whom happiness did not in the least depend upon God. Convinced of our powerlessness and of that of creatures, we must incline toward the Creator with all our strength. We must do everything for God. We must trace back all our actions to the One from whom alone we have the strength to do them. Otherwise we injure Order, we offend God, we commit injustice. This is incontestable. But we must search, in the invincible love which God gives us, for our happiness and for motives which could make us love Order. For, finally, God being just, we cannot be solidly happy if we are

not submissive to Order, and *he hates his soul, who loves iniquity* [*Psalms* 10:5]. It makes no difference whether these motives be of fear or of hope, provided that they motivate us and sustain us. The best are those most lively and strongest, most solid and durable.

XVII. There are some people[10] who make a thousand extravagant suppositions, and instead of having a just idea of divinity, would suppose (for example) that God had a design to make them eternally unhappy. And in this supposition they believe themselves obligated to love above all other things this phantom of their imagination. This is extremely embarrassing to them. For it is obvious that there is a contradiction in their supposition, and in others like it: Order wills that all merit be rewarded. But if there ever was a meritorious action, it would be to make the greatest sacrifice we could make, namely, to choose an unhappy eternity in order to please God. But according to their supposition, this action could not be rewarded. Thus it is clear that God, who has Order as His inviolable law, cannot ordain that man should choose to be unhappy, unless only for a time and in order that he might be rewarded, to reform a just and legitimate self-love, of which we cannot be deprived because we cannot will to be unhappy, desire for felicity being natural and invincible. Finally, what is the way to love God if we withdraw all rational motives for loving Him, or rather when in place of Him we present a terrible idol to the mind, which is in no way lovable? God wills that He be loved as He is, and not as it is impossible for Him to be. Infinitely perfect Being must be loved, and not some dreadful phantom, an unjust God, a God powerful even beyond truth, absolute, sovereign such as men would like to be, but without wisdom and goodness, qualities which men barely value. For the principle of these extravagant imaginations which frighten even those who form them, is that men judge of God by the inner feeling they have of themselves, and think without reflection that God can form designs which they feel themselves capable of forming. But let them fear not! If there were a god such as they imagine, the true God, jealous of His glory, would forbid us to adore or love it. Let them try to convince themselves that there is perhaps more danger of offending God when we give Him a horrible form, than in scorning this phantom. We must constantly search for motives which conserve and augment the love of God in us, such as the threats and promises which trace back to immutable Order. These are motives proper for creatures who invincibly want to be happy; they are motives of which the Scriptures are full. These just motives must not be taken away, nor the principle of all good rendered odious. Finally, the reason why the demons can no longer love God is that in effect, through their own fault, they no longer have any motive for loving Him. It has stopped, and they know that God will never be good in their eyes. For since we cannot love the good except by love as-union, the sort of love which is directed toward that which is capable of making us happy, they no longer have any motive for loving God by this sort of motive. But they do have a motive for loving God by this sort of motive. But they do have a motive to hate Him with all their strength, as the genuine but most just cause of the evils they suffer. Furthermore, since they are corrupt, the beauty of Order no longer

affects them, at least insofar as it might wound their self-love. It horrifies them, because it is the law which condemns them. Thus they cannot love God in any sense, neither His power, nor His justice, nor His wisdom, and they are obliged to be as they are, because Order demands it. Order is the indispensable law of all intelligent beings, no matter what condition they may be in, happy or unhappy. Since they merit what they are enduring, the demons are disordered, and will be incorrigible in their malice for all eternity. All this is only to show that everything which can make us love God, to go back to Jesus Christ, to live in Order, cannot be bad and must not be rejected. If I am in error here, I ask that I be enlightened, for this matter is of consequence. (But it is very difficult to be enlightened on this question, since we have no clear idea of the soul, and know it only by way of inner feeling.)[11]

NOTES

1. *Search After Truth*, 15th Clarification: On the efficacy of second causes; *Dialogues on Metaphysics*, 7, 9 & 10; *Christian Meditations*, 6 & 7, etc.
2. The section in parentheses was added in 1697.
3. M. refers to his quarrels with Bossuet, Fénelon and especially with Arnauld. See his *O.C.*, t. XVIII, pp. 222 ff.
4. Apparently due to disputes over this section, M. added the first part of this parenthetical remark in 1697 and the second part in 1707.
5. Council of Trent, Session 7, Canon 7.
6. *Ibid.*, Session 14, Chap. 4; Canon 5.
7. Added in 1697.
8. In response to the controversy over quietism, M. added this section in 1697. All succeeding sections received one higher number.
9. *De Spir. et littera*, ch. 4.
10. Probably the Port-Royal Jansenists.
11. Added in 1697.

Chapter Nine

Why the Church in its prayers addresses itself to the Father by way of the Son. We must pray to the Holy Virgin, the Angels and Saints, but not as occasional causes of inner grace. The Angels and the demons have power as occasional causes over bodies. Thus demons can tempt us, and Angels can promote the efficacy of Grace.

I. Jesus Christ, considered according to his human nature, is the only *true propitiator* [*Romans* 3:25], or *occasional* cause of Grace, as I have shown in the preceding chapter. It is clear that He alone is the one whom we must approach to obtain it. However, we may call upon God, for it is only He whom we must adore or call upon as *genuine* cause of our goods. We can also pray to the Holy Virgin, the Angels and Saints, not as *genuine* causes, nor as *occasional* or distributive causes of Grace, but as friends of God, intercessors close to Jesus Christ. We can even pray to Angels as protectors against the demon, or an occasional causes of certain effects which can dispose us to receive inner grace readily. But I must explain these truths at length, for they are of the highest consequence for governing our prayers, our worship and all our duties.

II. The Church, guided by the Spirit of truth, ordinarily addresses its prayers to the Father by way of the Son; and if it addresses itself to the Son, this is because it considers Him equal to the Father. Consequently it is not simply insofar as He is man that it calls upon Him, but insofar as He is man-God. This is evident by the ordinary conclusions of our prayers: "Through our Lord Jesus Christ"]; or "God Who lives and reigns", etc. For only God can be *true* cause; only He, by His own efficacy, could do what we ask for, so that the majority of our prayers and all our worship must relate to Him. But since He ordinarily acts only when the occasional causes He has established determine the efficacy of His laws, it is fitting that our way of calling upon Him be conformed to this feeling.

III. If Jesus Christ as man does not intercede for sinners, they call upon God in vain. For God acts only when the immutable order of justice requires it, or when the *occasional* or particular causes demand it. Now, since Grace is not given for merit, the immutable Order of justice does not oblige God to accord it to sinners who call upon Him. Thus it is necessary that the occasional cause oblige Him to give it, in consequence of the power He has given Him by establishing the general laws of Grace. This was done by God's decree, of which David spoke in the Second Psalm: *I am established King over Zion*, says

Jesus Christ [*Psalms* 2:6–8], *and here is what God has ordained: the Lord has told me, thou art my Son. This day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee all the Nations of the earth.* Jesus Christ as Sovereign Priest must *ask*, before God gives us to Him through grace, since no one comes to Jesus Christ *who is not attracted to Him by the Father* [*John* 6:44]. Though Jesus Christ alone, insofar as He is man, is the particular cause of the goods we receive, if the prayers of the Church were always addressed directly to Him, that would give men an occasion to err. For perhaps it would lead them to love Him precisely insofar as He is man, yet with that sort of love which is due only to the *genuine* cause, or even to adore Him without reference to the divine person in whom His human nature subsists. But adoration and love *as-union* (which honors *power*) is due only to the Omnipotent. Jesus Christ Himself does not deserve our adoration and this type of love, except because He is at the same time God and man.

IV. Therefore the Church is very correct in addressing prayers to God, the unique and *genuine* cause, but by way of Jesus Christ, in whom is found the *occasional* and distributive cause of the goods for which we ask. For, since sinners receive Grace only when Jesus Christ as man prays out of His momentary or habitual desires, passing or permanent, we must at all times know that only God gives Grace as its genuine cause, so that He alone may be the end of our love and worship. However, though we address ourselves to the general and *genuine* cause, it is as if we had addressed ourselves to the particular or *occasional* cause. That is, Jesus Christ as man being the Savior of sinners, Order wills that He be aware of their invocations, and, far from being jealous of the glory we give to God, Christ insofar as He is man constantly recognizes His powerlessness and His dependence. He will never hear those who, like the *Euthychians*, regard His human nature as transformed by the divine, and thereby deny Him the qualities of Advocate, Mediator, Head of the Church, in a word, deny Him as Sovereign Priest of genuine goods. Thus we see, on the one hand, that in order to pray effectively, it is not absolutely necessary to know precisely and distinctly those truths I have just explained. But on the other hand, the conduct of the Church squares perfectly with the foundations of Religion and Ethics, which are that God alone is the end of all things, and that we can come near to Him only by way of Jesus Christ our Lord. I believe all of this will quite easily be granted.

V. But as for the holy Virgin, the Angels, and Saints, there is more difficulty. However, the feeling of the Church is that they know our needs when we invoke them, and that since they are in grace with God and united to Jesus Christ their Head, they can solicit Him by their prayers and desires, to deliver us from our suffering. This would also seem to be incontestable by the example of St. Paul and all the saints, who are always recommending them in their prayers. For, finally, if the saints here on earth, still full of imperfection, can by their prayers be useful to their friends, I do not see good reasons to deny the saints this power. What does remain that we must note, is that they are not the *occasional* causes of inner grade. For that power has only been given to Jesus

Christ as Architect of the Eternal Temple, Head of the Church, necessary Mediator – in a word, particular or *occasional* cause of true goods.

VI. Thus we can pray to the holy Virgin, the Angels and saints that they solicit for us the charity of Jesus Christ. Apparently there are certain times which favor each saint, such as the days the Church dedicates as their feast-days. It may even be that they could have some quality as *occasional* causes, and thereby have the power to produce those effects which we call miraculous when we do not know the causes involved (but which God does not always cause by way of particular volitions).[1] The healing of illnesses, abundance of harvests, or other extraordinary changes in the arrangements of bodies are all examples. But since they all have to do with bodies, substances inferior to mind, it seems that Order requires or at least permits that the holy Virgin, Angels and Saints might have some power over them [as Jesus Christ has power over minds], so as to reward or rather make more admirable their virtue, and to encourage others to embrace it. But while this may not be certain concerning the saints, I believe that it is indubitable concerning the Angels. This truth is of such great consequence for several reasons, that I believe I must explain it briefly by reference to God's conduct in the execution of His designs.

VII. Since God cannot act except for His own glory, and finding Jesus Christ to be alone worthy of Himself, He does everything by relationship to His Son. This truth is so clear that it cannot be doubted, if we reflect on it. For what relation is there between God's action and His work, once we separate that work from Jesus Christ who sanctifies it?[2] What relation is there between a profane world, which is in no way divine, and the action of a completely divine God? In a word, what relation can there be between the finite and the infinite? And can we conceive that God, who cannot act except by way of His will, by way of the love He bears for Himself, could act to make a world which would have no relation to Him, or which could not deserve the action by which He would produce it?

VIII. Apparently the Angels, immediately after their creation, were astonished to see themselves without a Head, without Jesus Christ. Not being able to justify God's design in creating them, the wicked ones believed themselves to be deserving of something on account of their relation to God, and this pride led to their fall. Or, let us suppose (which seems more likely) that the Eternal Word, in order to justify in their minds the wisdom of God's conduct, made it known to them that He planned to form a man, and unite Himself to both substances which compose man, mind and body, in order through that man to sanctify all the work of God which (like man) is composed of the two sorts of being. The wicked ones were opposed to this plan, and did not want to adore Jesus Christ, or submit themselves to one they took to be an equal or even inferior because of His nature, though it was to be raised up because of the hypostatic union. Thus there came to be two opposing parties concerning God's work: St. Michael and the Angels, and Satan and his ministers, the principals of the two eternal cities, Jerusalem and Babylon.

IX. It is certain that God gave the Angels power over bodies. In effect, it

seems that Order demands that superior beings be able to act upon those beneath them. For God willed to make use of the faithful angels in order to lead the Jewish people, to reward and punish them by temporal goods and evils as the law promised them, and even to work under Jesus Christ toward His great work. It was necessary that they at least have power over bodies. And it even seems that the Demons were not totally deprived of power after their fall; since it could only be by power that they act on minds, and make themselves masters of the world. By the power He gave to St. Michael over His people, God wanted to foretell that of Jesus Christ. And He allowed the Demon to rule over the world in order that His Son would have enemies to combat and conquer, and so that He could make apparent His power by destroying the rebel Prince who had subjugated the whole earth to his own laws. For the power of the liberator is never as apparent as when the enemy has made himself total master, when no one has any power to resist him, and everyone has long groaned under his tyranny. Therefore, the Angels having immediate power over bodies, and thereby an indirect power over minds, as seen as the first people were formed, the wicked angels tempted the woman. As is known, they did this by flattering her, apparently according to a plan known to God, so that the Word might be united to man, to sanctify him, according to the words: "you will be like gods, knowing good and evil" [*Genesis* 3:5]. For I can see no other motive whereby enlightened minds should obey a demon, except the motive to be drawn from their profane condition to a condition divine and worthy of God, *You will be like gods*, by way of a particular union with universal Reason, the Eternal Word, with the one from whom all intelligent beings receive what they have of light: *knowing good and evil.* Since they were alone on earth, and masters of what posterity they would have (supposing they could have known something about the Incarnation of the Word), they had some cause to believe that this mystery was to be accomplished in them. Thus, the Demons having deceived them, they were conquered, and the Demons became their masters, and masters of all their descendants. Although they may have forwarded God's plan for the Word's Incarnation, since the first man's sin made it necessary for several reasons, still the Demons believed they had foiled it. For apparently these proud spirits imagined that union with God could be merited by an exact obedience to His commands.

X. Because of reasons I have given elsewhere, we must realize that because the first man sinned, it was necessary, in consequence of the laws of the union of body and soul and in conformity with the immutable order of justice, that the flesh would rebel against the spirit, and even that concupiscence would be transmitted to our children. (But this latter consequence was due to other reasons, which I have explained at some length in the *Search After Truth.*)[3] Now, concupiscence is the universal instrument of iniquity, which has inundated the world. For, being in the hands of the Demon, who can excite man in a thousand ways because of his power over bodies, concupiscence reigned until the coming of Jesus Christ, until the time of the Sovereign Priest of true goods, the occasional cause of inner delight, who alone can counterbalance the weight

of concupiscence and make useless to the Demon this instrument of his conquests. For since man invincibly wills to be happy, nothing can heal his heart, corrupted by sensible pleasures, except the unction of grace, the taste or foretaste of true goods. Since the good angels are not able to spread the grace of feeling or inner delight in the heart, and the wicked ones are able to excite concupiscence in it, it was a necessity that sin should reign, not only among the idolators but even among the Jews. We know that this people were very sensual and gross, always inclining to idolatry, and that they fell back into it often, in spite of the extraordinary miracles done by St. Michael and the Angels in their favor, in spite of the promises of temporal goods and threats of temporal evils, which were the objects of their concupiscence. For not even the Angels could preserve the worship of the true God, and hold to their duty those people subject to their guidance, except by motives of self-love, by promising them goods which true Christians believe to be in every way unworthy of their love.

XI. The law could not promise true goods, since the Angel by whom God gave it did not have the power to give that inner grace without which we cannot merit them. This was reserved for Jesus Christ. Since true goods cannot be the object of concupiscence, knowledge and worship of the true God would have been destroyed quite soon among the Jews. This chosen people would have been reduced to a handful of people belonging to Jesus Christ, that handful which inner grace has sanctified in every century. But knowledge of the true God had to be conserved with some glitter among the Jews, the prophetic people, irreproachable witnesses to the truths of Religion in spite of the power and artifices of the Prince of this world, until finally the only Son of God, for whom and by whom all things have been made, could descend from Heaven to change the face of the earth. For He has come to begin the astonishing and wonderful ending of God's conduct – the ending which will close with the indissoluble marriage of the Bridegroom and the Bride, who will enjoy eternal felicity amid divine splendors, constantly singing canticles of praise to the glory of the One who will have brought their enemies to their knees by the invincible power of His arms, and by ways perfectly worthy of His wisdom and other attributes.

XII. These great truths doubtless deserve to be proven and explained at greater length, but this is not the place. My design is primarily to make it understood that the Angels are the Ministers of Jesus Christ, and *that they are sent*, as St. Paul says [*Hebrews* 1:34.], *to carry out their ministry for the sake of those who are to inherit the kingdom*, and that therefore they have the quality of being *occasional* causes.[4] For God does not communicate His power to creatures in any other way, except by their having the power, not to give inner grace, but to produce in bodies and thereby in the souls to which bodies are united, certain effects which can promote the efficacy of Grace and prevent men from finding only grounds for failure, which grounds Demons propose to them. For, as the Prophet says [*Psalms* 90:11–12], *He has commanded His Angels to protect you in all your paths; they will bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone.*

XIII. Thus we can pray to the Angels, and ask their protection against that *Roaring Lion* who, as St. Peter says [*I Peter* 5:8], *constantly stalks around us, to devour us*; or, to speak as does St. Paul [*Ephesians* 6:12], *against these invisible powers, these principalities, these Princes of the world, full of error and darkness, these evil spirits which fill the air; for it is not only against flesh and blood that we must do battle.* But we must not regard the angels as distributive or *occasional* causes of grace, or render to them that worship which is due only to Jesus Christ. *Be not deceived*, says St. Paul [*Colossians* 2:18 & 19], *by those who humble themselves before the Angels and render to them a superstitious worship, who mix up things they do not understand, dazzled by the vain imaginings of their own minds; instead, remain attached to the Head from which the body of the Church receives the spirit which gives it increase and life; to Jesus Christ [*Coloss. *2:15], who, having disarmed the principalities and the powers, after having conquered them by His cross, has publicly made them serve Him, to the glory of His triumph.*

NOTES

1. Added in 1697.
2. See the 9th and 14th *Dialogues on Metaphysics* [M.].
3. See the 8th Clarification of the *Search After Truth*, "On original sin."
4. *Dialogues on Metaphysics*, No. 7, and secs. 16 & 17 of No. 12 [M.].

Chapter Ten

On the occasional causes of those feelings and movements of the soul which resist the efficacy of grace, whether grace of light or of feeling. The union of the mind to God is immediate, and that of the mind to the body is not. Explanation of some general laws of the union of soul and body, needed for understanding what follows.

I. In Chapters Five, Six, and Seven I have spoken at length of the *occasional cause of light*; in the two preceding chapters I have tried to make understood just what it meant by the *occasional cause of the Grace of feeling* and what must be done to obtain it. Therefore, since only light and feeling determine the will or natural movement of the soul toward the good in general, all that remain for me to explain in this chapter, in relation to methods of acquiring or conserving an habitual and dominant love of immutable Order, are the laws of the union of body and soul. These are the *occasional* causes of all the lively and confused feelings and all the undeliberate movements which unite us to our bodies, and, by way of our bodies, to all the objects around us. For, in order to love Order and acquire virtue, it is not sufficient to obtain the grace of feeling, which alone stirs the soul and gets it moving toward the true good. In addition, this must be done in a way such that this grace might act in our hearts according to its full efficacy. Thus we must carefully avoid the occasional causes of those feelings and movements which resist the action of grace, and which sometimes render it completely useless for our sanctifications. Here is the most general principle of all that I shall say in the first part of this work.

II. Man's mind has two essential and natural relations: to God, *genuine* cause of all that occurs within him; and to his body, *occasional* cause of all thoughts relating to sensible objects. God speaks immediately to the mind, and only in order to unite it to Himself. The body speaks to the mind only for its own sake, to connect the mind to sensible objects. God speaks to the mind only to enlighten it and render it perfect. The body speaks to the mind to blind and corrupt it in its favor. The body, by means of pleasure, traps man and plunges him into his unhappiness. In a word, though God does all, and though the body could not act on the mind any more than the mind could act upon the body, except as occasional cause in consequence of the laws of the union of body and soul (a union which sin has changed into a dependence), this dependent relation of the mind to the body is the cause of all errors and all disorders into which we fall.

III. However, we must be thoroughly convinced and never forget that the mind can have immediate relation only to God, that it can be directly united only to Him. For the mind can be united to the body only because it is first united to God Himself. It is certain, for thousands and thousands of reasons, that if, for example, I suffer the pain of a sting, it is God acting in me, in consequence of the laws of the union of body and soul, laws efficacious because of the action of Divine acts of will which alone are capable of acting in me. But by itself, the body cannot be united to the mind, nor the mind to the body. They have no immediate relation to each other, nor has any creature any immediate relation to any other creature. I am speaking here of relations of causality, such as those which depend on the union of the soul with the body. It is God who does all; His will is the link of all unions. The modifications of substances depend only on the One who gives and conserves their being. This is an essential truth which I believe to have demonstrated sufficiently in my other writings.[1]

IV. But though the mind can only be immediately united to God, it can still be united to creatures by way of God's will, for God communicates His power to them when He establishes them as occasional causes in order to produce certain effects. My soul is united to my body, because on the one hand, my will is established as an occasional cause of some changes which God alone can produce in my body; and on the other hand, the changes which occur in my body are established as occasional causes of some of those changes which take place in my mind.

V. Now God has established these laws for several reasons which are unknown to us. But among those known to us, the primary one is that by following them, God acts in a uniform and constant manner by general laws, by the most simple and most wise ways, in a word, in that way which bears the mark of His attributes. The second reason is that man's body is his victim. For it seems to man that he sacrifices himself, by way of pain, and that he is annihilated by death. The soul is on trial while in the body, and God, willing that He be in some way merited, willing that rewards be proportioned to merit, furnishes us, by the laws of the union of body and soul, by a simple, uniform and constant path, with a thousand ways of sacrificing ourselves and thereby, with His grace, earning the eternal reward. I have explained these truths elsewhere, but we need to be reminded of them.

VI. The kind of union of the mind with God which has no relation to creatures is looked upon by many as a baseless imagining. For since there is nothing sensible about God's operation in us, we believe that we are responding to ourselves, and reproaching ourselves, when universal Reason responds to us or reproaches us in the most secret part of ourselves. Certainly anyone who knows nothing about truth or about Order would not know about this union, even when God is acting in him, just as it is true that anyone who does not love truth and obey Order does not gain by this union even if he knows about it.

VII. As for that kind of union of the mind with God which does relate to other creatures, it is believed to be real, but is poorly conceived. For we imagine

ourselves to receive from objects that which comes from God alone. The cause of this prejudice is the same as for the preceding one: since God's operation is not visible, we attribute to the objects which strike upon our senses all that which we feel in their presence, even though they are themselves present to the mind only because God, more present to us than our very selves, makes them known to us in His own substance. For it is His substance, I say, which alone is intelligible, which alone is capable of acting in us and producing there all those sensations which make intellectual ideas sensible, and which make us judge confusedly not only that there are bodies, but also that it is these bodies which act in us and make us happy. And that confusion is the cause of all our disorders.

VIII. For men at all times will to be happy, and never to be unhappy. Momentary pleasure makes us momentarily happy; and pain, unhappy. Now, we feel pleasure or pain in the presence of bodies, and believe that they are the *genuine* causes of pleasure and pain. Thus it is a sort of necessity that we fear or love them. And even though we might be convinced by certain and metaphysical demonstrations that God alone is the genuine cause, still that does not give us the strength to scorn bodies while we are enjoying them. For the judgments of the senses act upon us more than the most solid reasons. It is not so much the light as it is pleasure which stirs the soul and sets it in motion.

IX. Thus it is obvious that to conserve the dominant love of immutable Order, we must, on the one hand, use all our efforts to augment that kind of union of the mind with God which has no relation to sensible objects, and on the other hand, to diminish as much as possible that other kind of union which relates us to bodies, to substances inferior to ours, substances which, far from being able to make us perfect, cannot by themselves even act in us. And if they can corrupt us, it is because the sin of the first man introduced concupiscence, which comes from the waste we make of our power to halt or suspend the laws of the communication of movements, by which movements bodies around us act upon the body we animate, and thereby act upon our minds in consequence of the laws of the union of soul with the body.

X. It seems that at least to the satisfaction of some, I have already sufficiently proven[2] that since all movements of the soul depend on either light or feeling, we must constantly work at the task of attending, which is the occasional cause of light, and frequently to invoke Jesus Christ, occasional cause of the grace of feeling, in order that those movements which bring us near to God and those which unite us to Him might both be excited in us. Now I must explain the means of diminishing the union between ourselves and created things, so that our minds and hearts will not be divided between created things and God. For we are situated in such a fashion, between God and bodies, that we cannot approach bodies without moving away from God. It is sufficient to break off our intercourse with them in order to find ourselves united to God by way of the continual influence Jesus Christ spreads throughout the members of His body.

XI. Of course, not all of the remarks I am about to make will be needed by

those who have read and meditated upon the principles I established in the *Search After Truth*. If all men were reasonable enough to study methodically, or if not that, then to have enough fairness so as to trust that an author might have thought more than they have about his subject, then in either case I should not be obliged to give a general review of what has been said and proven several ways elsewhere. No one reads Appolonius or Archimedes without knowing his Euclid, because we cannot understand anything about conic sections without knowing ordinary geometry. And when dealing with geometry, if we do not understand it, we know quite well that we do not. But in questions of ethics and Religion, we all believe ourselves to have quite a good conception of everything the books say on these matters (though why we should think so, I dare not say).[3] Hence people pass judgment on these issues without carefully nothing that ethics – I mean ethics demonstrated or explained according to principles – has the same relation to knowledge of man as the science of curved lines has to that of straight lines.

XII. Therefore, I think I am obligated to make clear certain suppositions about principles previously proven, which are needed for what follows. This will perhaps make clearer many things I have already discussed, which I sorely fear have not been well understood. But these suppositions are not meant for those who have meditated upon the principles explained elsewhere, nor for those who have understood everything said in this work so far. These readers may pass to the next chapter and avoid a useless lecture.

XIII. First, I take as a quite convincing supposition that, in order to unite the soul to the body, it is not necessary to confuse the ideas of these two substances. But most men do this, when, in order to explain this union, they distribute the soul throughout all parts of the body and attribute to bodies all those feelings which can only belong to the soul. The union of the soul with the body consists in the mutual and reciprocal action of these two sorts of being, in consequence of the efficacy of Divine acts of will, which alone can change the modifications of substances. The soul thinks, and is not extended; the body is extended, and never thinks. Therefore, the soul cannot be united to the body by extension, but only by thought; nor can the body be united to the soul by feelings, but only by certain configurations and movements. The body is pricked, but the soul feels the pain; the soul fears some evil, but the body moves away from it. The soul wills to move an arm; immediately the arm is moved and the soul becomes aware of the movement. Thus there is a mutual correspondence between particular thoughts of the soul and particular modifications of the body, in consequence of natural laws God has established and constantly follows. That is how the union of the soul with the body is accomplished. Imagination can furnish other ideas about all of this. But that correspondence is incontestable, and is sufficient for my purposes in what follows. Therefore, I do not want to, and I must not, build upon foundations less sure than or different from these.

XIV. In the second place, I suppose it to be known that the soul is not immediately united to all parts of the body, but to that one part which responds for all of them, and which I shall call (without having knowledge of it) the

principal part. Therefore, notwithstanding the laws of soul-body union, a man's arm can be cut off without any thought corresponding to that act resulting in the soul, but not even the smallest change can occur in the principal part of the brain without also occurring in the soul. Experience proves these truths, for sometimes we cut ourselves and feel nothing, because the shock of the cut is not then communicated to our principal part. And, on the other hand, those who have lost an arm often feel a very real pain in an imaginary arm, because the same sort of shock occurs in the principal part of the brain as would have occurred had there been a pain in the arm.

XV. Before his sin, the first man had complete power over his body. Whenever he wanted to, he could prevent the movement or action of objects from being communicated from the sense organ which was being stimulated by them, to the principal part of the brain. He could do this apparently because of a sort of revulsion, in a way similar to that we employ when we want to become attentive to thoughts which the presence of sensible objects makes elusive.

XVI. In the third place, I suppose that we no longer have complete power over the body. Therefore, in order to gain some freedom of the mind, to think about what we will, to love what we must love, it is necessary that the principal part (which responds to the organs of external sense) should be calm and without agitation, or at least that we be able to calm it or turn it whichever way we desire. Our attention depends upon our will, but even more it depends on our feelings and passions. We must make great efforts not to look at what strikes us, not to love what is pleasing. The soul is never more tired than when fighting against pleasures, and thereby becoming (in a sense) momentarily unhappy.

XVII. In the fourth place, I suppose that it is known that whenever the principal part is affected or shocked in an agreeable or disagreeable manner, it excites some movement in the animal spirits which then move the body towards some object acting upon it, or move it away from such an object, and I suppose that therefore the shocks to the brain fibers which are related to good or evil are always followed by the course of the spirits which dispose the body as it should be in relation to the object present; and that even the feelings of the soul corresponding to these shocks are followed by movements of that soul which correspond to the courses of those spirits. Now the traces or shocks of the brain are in the same relation to the courses of the animal spirits as are the soul's feelings to the passions; and the brain traces are to the soul's feelings as the movement of the animal spirits is to the movement of the passions.

XVIII. In the fifth place, I suppose that objects never strike upon the brain without leaving effects of their action, nor do the animal spirits act without leaving effects of their course. Furthermore, I suppose that these traces and scars are not easily removed or erased if the brain has been frequently or harshly struck, and if the course of the spirits has been rapidly traced, or frequently traced in the same manner; that memory and corporeal habits consist only of those traces, which give the brain and other parts of the body a particular facility to obey the coursing of the spirits; and that therefore the brain is

scarred and the imagination is sullied when we have enjoyed pleasures and had no fear of becoming accustomed to sensible objects.

XIX. Finally, I suppose that we distinctly conceive that when several traces have been formed at the same time, we cannot open ourselves to one of them without becoming open to all; and that therefore there are always several accessory ideas confusedly being presented to the mind, all related to the chief one to which the mind is applying itself; also there are always several confused feelings and indirect movements which accompany the principal passion the one which is stimulating the soul and moving it toward some particular object. Nothing is more certain than this association among traces, and also between them and different courses of the spirits; among ideas, and between them and the feelings and passions. If we want to know a little about man, then if we would reflect upon our inner feelings of what is going on within ourselves, we would discover more truths in an hour than I could explain in a month – provided we do not confuse the soul with the body and make one thing out of them, and provided that we carefully distinguish the properties of a thinking substance from those belonging to an extended substance. I believe I must remark that these kinds of truths are of infinite consequence, not only for distinctly conceiving what has been said so far and will be said below, but generally for all sciences related to man. Since I have treated this subject at considerable length, in the *Search After Truth*, chiefly in Book Two, I did not think it necessary to say any more on that subject. If these suppositions still seem obscure and do not sufficiently open the mind to make more clear what I must say, let the reader take recourse to that book; for I cannot bring myself to explain the same thing fully several times.

NOTES

1. See No. 7 of the *Dialogues on Metaphysics* [M.].
2. *Christian Meditations*, 13 & 14, etc.
3. Parenthetical remark was omitted after 1684.

Chapter Eleven

On what sort of death we must die in order to see God, to be united to Reason and delivered from concupiscence. The grace of faith gives us this happy death. Christians are dead to sin because of baptism, and are living in the risen Jesus Christ. On the mortification of the senses, and the use we must make of them. We must be united to, or separated from, bodies without either loving or fearing them. But the most sure remedy of all is to break off all intercourse with them, as much as we can.

I. Death is a quick way to be delivered from concupiscence, to break in one stroke that unhappy union which keeps us from being reunited to our Principle. But I need not prove here that to accomplish this by our own hand is to commit a crime which, far from reuniting us to God, separates us even farther from Him. It is permissible to scorn life, even to wish for death, as St. Paul said, in order to be with Jesus Christ: *I want to be gone and be with Christ* [*Phillipians* 1:23]. But we are obligated to conserve our health and our lives; the grace of Jesus Christ is to deliver us from concupiscence, from this mortal body which ties us to creatures. *What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body doomed to death*, wrote that same apostle, *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!* [*Romans* 7:24].

II. It is certain that we must die to see God, and to be united to Him; for no one can see Him and live, as Scripture says [*Exodus* 33:20]. But it is also true that we die in proportion as we give up the body, as we separate ourselves from the world, as we silence our senses, imagination and passions by which we are tied to our bodies and thereby to everything around us. We die to our bodies and to the world in proportion as we go back into ourselves, consult the inner truth, become united to and obey Order. Eternal wisdom is hidden from the eyes of all the *living* [*Job* 28:21]. But those who are *dead* to the times and to themselves, those who have crucified their flesh with its disordered desires; those who are crucified with Jesus Christ, and in whose eyes the world is crucified, in a word, those who are pure in heart, whose imagination is not polluted, are in a condition to contemplate truth. Now they see God only confusedly and imperfectly, *a dim reflection, in a mirror* [*I Corinthians* 13:12]. But they really see it, they are directly and immediately united to it, and they will see it one day face to face: for we must begin to know and love God in this life, in order to possess Him in the next.

III. But those who live not only the life of the body, but also the life of the

world; those who enjoy pleasures and spread themselves out to all objects around them, will never find truth. For wisdom does not dwell in those who live among the delights of pleasure. *The road to it is still unknown to man, not to be found in the land of the living.* [*Job* 28:13]. So we must not select that death which kills the body and ends our life. But we must select that death which chastises the body and diminishes life, I mean that sort of life which is due to the union of the mind with the body, or its dependence on the body. We must begin and continue our sacrifice here, and await its consummation and reward in God. For on earth the life of a Christian is a continual Sacrifice, by which he constantly immolates his body, his concupiscence, his self-love for the love of Order. And such death, precious in God's sight, is the day of his victories and triumphs in the risen Jesus Christ, the Forerunner of our glory and the model for our eternal reformation.

IV. St. Paul teaches us that *the old man has already been crucified with Jesus Christ* [*Romans* 6:6], because the sacrifice of Jesus Christ offered on the cross has effectively earned for us – particularly those of us who have been washed in His blood by baptism – all the grace needed to counterbalance and even diminish the weight of concupiscence bit by bit, so that sin no longer governs us except by our fault. So let us not imagine that our cowardice is justifiable, that we may not resist the law of the flesh which constantly revolts against the law of the spirit. The law of sin would be absolute mistress of the movements of our hearts, if Jesus Christ had not destroyed it by His cross. But we, *who are dead and buried to sin, by Baptism* [*Romans* 6:4], who are justified and risen in Jesus Christ glorified [*Romans* 6:11], who are animated by the influence of our Head, the spirit of Jesus Christ, with a strength entirely divine, we must not believe that Heaven abandons us in our combat, or that if we are vanquished it was Heaven's help which we lacked.[1] Jesus Christ never ignores those who call upon Him. It would be an impiety to believe that, for whosoever shall call upon the Lord, shall be saved, as all the Scriptures say [*Acts* 2:21; *Romans* 10:13; *Joel* 2:32].

V. *It is certain that we would not be glorified and seated in heaven, in Jesus Christ; that we would not have eternal life abiding within us; that we would not be the heirs of God and co-heirs of Jesus Christ, to be citizens the holy city and adopted children of God Himself,* as the Apostles described Christians [*Ephesians* 2:5 & 6; *I John* 3:15], if God were not faithful in His promises when permitting us to be tempered beyond our strength, which notion St. Paul [*I Corinthians* 10:14] forbids us from accepting. But we can truly say that we are already glorified in Jesus Christ, and so forth, because in effect all that we are required to do is to conserve by grace the right which that very grace gives us, to such hopes in the future. And further, it is kind of brutality which should startle our minds, to claim that man by his own fault is losing infinite goods and is damned forever by his own negligence.

VI. Supposing this truth as incontestable, let us arouse our faith and hope; let us seek the means to assure our salvation, and let us make use of that grace God would not spread over us for any design except to sanctify us and save us, to

sanctify us effectively so that it might make us merit true goods. *You are dead,* says St. Paul, *and your life is hidden in God with Jesus Christ; so mortify the members of your body* [*Col.* 3:3]. We are dead to sin because of living in Jesus Christ our Head. By His influence we must and can give a death-blow to the old man; and no one else can do it for us. But to carry out this design, according to the advice of St. Paul, we must labor all our lives at the mortification of the senses, carefully watching out for the purity of our imagination, and watching out for the purity of our imagination, and governing all movements of passion according to Order, in a word, we must diminish the weight of sin which, by the momentary efforts of excited concupiscence, is capable of counterbalancing the strongest grace and thereby of separating us from God. *So mortify the members of your body.* If we do what we are required to do, grace will act with all its efficacy in our hearts; we shall die in the sense meant by St. Paul [*Col.* 3:4]; and finally our life, hidden in God with Jesus Christ, will appear with magnificence, when Jesus Christ Himself will come, and will appear surrounded by glory and majesty.

VII. Of all the exercises appropriate for promoting the efficacy of grace, none is more necessary than mortification of the senses. For only by way of the body are we united to things around us. It is chiefly by feeling that the soul extends itself, so to speak, to all parts of the body; and only by way of imagination and the passions that it is moved toward the outside, and spreads itself out toward creatures. But just as the senses present objects to the mind, so the imagination and passions presuppose the senses and depend on them. For it is certain that the corporeal image of a sensible object (there is no question, here, of those figures which are the objects of mathematics is only the grace and shock which that object produced in the brain by means of the senses, which trace is renewed by the action of the imagination or the coursing of the spirits. As for the passions, they too can only be excited by the movement of the animal spirits, which means that the brain, reservoir of these spirits, would have to be shocked by the senses or the imagination. Thus, anyone who mortifies his senses attacks the union of mind and body at its principle, where the mind is dependent. He diminishes his animal life, the weight of sin and concupiscence, and promotes the efficacy of grace which alone can reunite us to our principle.

VIII. The most extensive of our senses, the one which serves all the others and without which the imagination and passions would be helpless, is sight. No matter how little we reflect upon ourselves and the use we make of our eyes, we recognize that every day they expose us to a thousand dangers [*II Samuel* 11]. One indiscreet glance can certainly make us fall into the fires. One such glance brought David down, in adultery, and then led to homicide. Eve let herself be deceived the demon because she dared to gaze fixedly at the forbidden fruit and found it quite agreeable to the sight, *good to eat and pleasing to the eye [Genesis* 3:6]. And if either of them had scorned his senses as deceptive and had distrusted their testimony, they would probably have preserved their innocence. It is not really hearsay for me to go on from this to prove the necessity of closing our eyes to many encounters. Rather it is better to explain these things

in terms of principles, which means here that I should explain the legitimate uses we must generally make of all the senses. And that will reduce them to the most narrow use we can make of them.

IX. Here is the principle which I think I have amply demonstrated in the first book of the *Search After Truth* [in Bk. I, chs. 5 & 20]: the senses are given to us only for the conservation of our sensible being. They are perfectly regulated toward that end. But nothing is more false, more deceptive, more disordered than the senses as people usually use them. And here is the proof of that: we are composed of mind and body; we seek two sorts of good, that of the mind and that of the body. The good of the mind is found in the light, and is the true good. That of the body is discerned by feeling, and is a false good, or rather no good at all. If we could know sensible objects as they are in themselves, without feeling something to be in them which is not there, we could not seek them and be sustained by them without feeling some regret and a sort of horror. And if we sensed true goods otherwise than as they are, then, without knowing them, we would love them as do the brutes, without deserving any merit for loving them. But the mind can and must live upon the intelligible substance of Reason; and only bodies can sustain bodies and make them grow. Intelligible goods do not comfort the machine, and sensible goods disrupt the mind. Hence, the light and evidence are to the mind as feeling and instinct are to the body's goods. This cannot be disputed.

X. The reason for all this is that God made the mind only for Himself. He did not make it to occupy itself with sensible objects, or to conserve and guide by reason the body it informs. If we wanted to gain distinct and reasoned knowledge of the infinite relations between the body we animate and all the bodies around it, to know, for example, when we need to eat, how much of which fruits we need in order to sustain health and life, we would have to apply ourselves completely to physics; and, of course, we could not live long by that means, least of all children who have no experience. But instead, hunger notifies us of the body's need and to some extent governs the amount of nourishment we take. Formerly it governed perfectly, and it still will govern well enough if we eat those fruits God has made to grow here. Taste is a quick and incontestable test that certain fruits are or are not nourishing. Without knowing the texture of a rock or unknown fruit, it is enough to put either on the tongue, a faithful doorman (at least before sin) concerning anything which should enter the house, in order to be assured that there will be no trouble. The same goes for our other senses. Nothing is quicker than touch to warn us that we have burned ourselves, when we imprudently touch a hot iron. Therefore the mind, leaving the conduct of the body to the senses, can apply itself to the search for true goods, contemplate the perfections and works of its Author, study the Divine law, and govern all its movements by that law. Beyond that, the senses should advise it respectfully and should refrain from interrupting it when it imposes silence upon them. Formerly, that was in fact man's condition. But the first man's sin changed that admirable order, and while the body-soul union remained the same, the mind unhappily found itself depending on and

being glutted by the senses because of its loss of power to govern them, as I have said many times before.

XI. The senses, then, are instituted to furnish man with short and sure ways of discerning bodies insofar as they are related to the conservation of health and life. Let us make use of them to unite ourselves to, or separate ourselves from, objects by way of the body – that is all within order. I say *unite* ourselves, or *separate* ourselves; I do not say *love* or *fear*, for love and hate are movements of the soul which must never be determined by confused feelings. It is reason and not instinct which must guide the soul. Whether or not the soul loves bread is a matter of indifference to the body. If we eat it without loving it, the body is not left unnourished by it. And if we love it without eating it, the body will never become robust. But meanwhile the soul will become corrupted, because it misgoverns itself. If, instead of inclining toward Him who constantly impresses Himself upon the soul so that it will love Him only, the soul's movements incline instead toward bodies, substances dead, inferior and ineffectual, that soul is blind, misgoverned and brutal. These are not chimerical abstractions; they are necessary truths, immutable laws, indispensable obligations.

XII. But what! Can we unite ourselves to bodies without loving them? Can we flee our persecutor without fearing him? Yes, without a doubt, we can – for I am speaking chiefly of free movements, which certainly can be made without being conformed to natural movements. But what if we do not do what we can do? what to conclude then? We conclude that man's heart is so corrupt that his evil is incurable, that he cannot control his senses, that he aggravates and renews his own wounds; and that therefore his mortification of the senses is the most necessary thing in the world, given the condition to which man is reduced. Finally, can that He impresses movement on the soul for His own sake, that all love of bodies is misgovernment, in a word, that we are indispensably obligated to love God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our strength?

XIII. When the soul is penetrated by the presence of God, and sees that presence constantly at work in the objects which strike upon the senses; when the mind is momentarily convinced of the general impotence of creatures and applies itself to governing the heart according to its lights, doubtless it can? at such impotence of creatures and applies itself to governing the heart according to its lights, doubtless it can at such times unite itself to bodies or separate from them without loving or fearing them. But it is true that this reflective time cannot last. The mind becomes tired by giving attention to its duties. Then, if senses are affected by some object which flatters them, the soul is surprised and satisfied at the appearance of good and no longer holds back from following the movement of the humors and the blood according to its own sort of movement. All pleasure excites and determines natural movement in the soul; and since at all times we will to be happy, the free movement of the will easily conforms to the natural movement exciting the senses. We must resist in order not to follow this latter movement. But by resisting, we abandon ourselves, we lose the repose we love, and make ourselves unhappy as soon as we stop following the attractions of those pleasures which make us happy.

XIV. It is better to get out of a flood-tide which sweeps us along, if and when we stop resisting it, than to stay in it though unable to resist, and be carried away. At least this is the safest thing to do. So, too, it is better, as much as we are able, to break off our intercourse via the senses with sensible objects, than to expose ourselves to thousands of dangers by relying upon our own strength – strength definitely vain and deceptive. However imagination exalts our strength or human pride defends it, experience deflates it, faith condemns it and renders it contemptible. This, too, we take to be the safest course. For eternity is at stake here, that horrible alternative between the felicity of the saints and the supplications of the demons over infinite centuries. Fortunately we can close the avenues by which this dangerous intercourse of the senses with false goods is carried on. The movement of the hands and feet is subject to our wills. It is up to us to lower our glance, to turn our head, to walk away. We can avoid the fatal blow which brings an infamous object down upon us. But once that blow has struck, the brain remains scarred, the imagination polluted, the heart affected and corrupted. Everything the force of the blow produces in the brain and nerves which excite passions, is not at all subject to our wills. Therefore, without too much trouble we can prevent this evil by the mortification of our senses, but we cannot fight it without an infinite number of battles. We are very, very fortunate if, by being judicious in our reckoning, we prevent it from spreading and plunging us into the fires.

XV. Let us then undertake to convince ourselves fully that our senses are false witnesses which constantly testify against us and in favor of our passions; and that while it is permissible to listen to them for the sake of bodily health, nothing is more dangerous than consulting them concerning the soul's good. Just as, for example, it would be quite ridiculous to give a reasoned proof that gold or precious stones are not fit for nourishing us, so too it is acting against order and good sense to use our sense of taste to test whether or not wine is an object worthy of our love and labor. We understand quite well that the light must govern the soul's movements, and pleasure those of the body; that the light never deceives, and that it leaves the mind free without pushing it toward the good presented by the light, so that the soul will love that good freely and according to reason. We know that pleasure, by contrast, always deceives, that it removes or diminishes the mind's freedom and naturally pushes it not toward God who produced it, but toward some sensible object which seems to produce it. Let us remember these principles and draw from them this consequence, that the mortification of the senses is the most necessary exercise to anyone intending to live by Reason, to follow order, work toward his own perfection, and become assured of a solid happiness and eternal felicity.

XVI. Since I have proven at length in the first book of the *Search After Truth* that generally our senses deceive us in all things, I do not believe I need to linger over that subject to demonstrate what I have just presented. Rather, I fear that those who have read and meditated upon my other writings will only find themselves saying that I have repeated the same things all over again. But, writing for everyone, it could not be otherwise, for all truths are linked and

related to each other. We must know man and his maladies, at least in part, in order to understand the remedies and to know ethics by principles. If I had presumed as already known all the truths I have proven elsewhere, not everyone would understand what I mean here. Some would become frightened of these truths, and this book would have the same fate as had the *Treatise on Nature and Grace*, which I had written only for those who already distinctly knew the truths I had fully explained earlier. I made note of that restriction, yet contrary to it, some persons became so incensed that even those heresies whose very principles I had destroyed in that book, were yet imputed to me.

NOTE

1. Apparently a reference to the first of the five condemned propositions alleged to be found in the *Augustinus* of Jansenism, from which view M. strongly distinguished his own: "Some of God's commandments are impossible to just men who will to accomplish them, and who make efforts with what powers they have in order to that end; the grace which would make it possible for them is lacking."

Chapter Twelve

On the imagination. This term is obscure and confused. What, in general, imagination is. Different sorts of imagination. How its effects are dangerous. On what people call 'sophistication.' This quality strongly opposed to the grace of Jesus Christ. It is fatal to those possessing it, and to those valuing and admiring it in others who do not possess it.

I. Though the senses may be the primary principle of our disorders, or the origin of the mind-body union which now separates the mind from union with God, still it is not sufficient merely to govern their use if grace is to work in us with all its efficacy. It is further necessary to silence the imagination and the passions. Imagination, like the passions, depends upon the senses. But it has its own malignity. When the senses excite it, it produces extraordinary effects. And often, even if the senses are not at the moment shaking it, it will still act from its own strength. It casts an obscuring pall over all the soul's ideas by the phantoms it produces, and sometimes those phantoms of the imagination are so agreeable or so terrifying, so lively and animated that they whip the passions into a furor by the violence of the movements they excite. But I am aware that some people do not grasp these truths clearly, and I must explain them more distinctly.

II. The term 'imagination' is widely used; but it is hard for me to believe that everyone who uses it has a distinct idea of what it means. I have said before, and I repeat (for there is no harm in thinking about this more than once) the most common words are the most confused, and ordinary discourse is most often only a game with words, empty of meaning, which we hear and take for echoes, like the calls of shepherds. Provided that we converse agreeably, that affection is reciprocated, and that marks of respect are mutually given, we usually leave such conversation quite content. We make the same use of words as we do of expressions and manners; words are joined to them by the ties of the senses and the passions; and most often reason has no part in social intercourse except to serve man's vanity and injustice. For truth is 'good-for-nothing' in this world. Those who seek it are visionaries, aloof spirits, dangerous people who must be avoided as if contaminated. Hence words, whose chief use should be to present the mind's pure ideas, ordinarily serve only to express sense-ideas, and those movements of the soul which are already overly-communicated by manners, facial expressions, tone of voice, posture and movement of the body.

III. 'Imagination' is one of those terms usage authorizes but does not clarify. For ordinary usage clarifies only those words which arouse sense-ideas. All the words which ordinary usage substitutes for pure ideas are either equivocal or confused. Since the imagination is only visible through its effects, and since its nature is difficult to know, different people pronounce a particular word without sharing a common ideas about it; it may even be that many people have no idea of it whatsoever.

IV. The imagination may be considered in two ways: from the body's point of view, and from that of the soul. From the body's point of view, imagination means a brain capable of receiving traces, and animal spirits capable of making such traces. We may conceive of animal spirits in whatever way we choose to imagine them, provided that they be some sort of bodies which, by their movement, could act on the substance of the principal part of the brain. From the mind's point of view, imagination means images corresponding to traces, and the sort of attention which is capable of forming such images or sense-ideas. For it is our attention which, as occasional cause, determines the course of the spirits, by which in turn the traces are formed, and to which traces sense-ideas are tied. All this follows as a consequence of the laws of soul-body union.

V. These images or traces, formed by the strength of the imagination, as well as by the action of objects, have an effect on the brain, reservoir of spirits, such that the course of these spirits is determined by certain nerves so that some are distributed toward the heart and others toward the viscera to produce fermentation or cooling in those places. In a word, they produce various movements because of their relation to an object present to the senses or the imagination; the other nerves then respond to stimuli at the outer surface of the body and make it take account of the situation outside so as to dispose it to those movements which that external object demands.

VI. The course of the animal spirits through the nerves connecting inner parts of the body is accompanied by passions in the soul. These passions, originally produced by the action of the imagination, then turn about and fortify the traces and the image of the object which gave birth to them. Passions do this because of the great abundance of spirits they cause to rush to the head. For passions arouse, maintain and fortify attention, the occasional cause of the course of spirits, which cause in turn forms the brain traces, which determine another course of spirits toward the heart and other parts of the body to sustain these same passions. All this, again, occurs because of the admirable economy of the laws of soul-body union. Here, then, is some idea of the imagination and its relation to the passions. I have explained this matter at greater length elsewhere.[1] But I believe this is enough to help attentive readers to understand what I mean by 'imagination' in general, and in particular that:

VII. By *polluted* or *corrupted* imagination, I mean a brain which has received such deep traces as to apply both mind and body to objects unworthy of man; and by *purity* of imagination I mean a brain both sound and whole, without such criminal traces which corrupt both mind and heart.

By *weak and delicate* imagination, I mean a brain whose principal part, on

which the course of spirits depends, is easy to penetrate and shake.

By *fine and delicate* imagination, I mean a brain whose fibers are so delicate that they distinctly receive and conserve even the least traces engraved upon them by the course of the spirits.

By *lively* imagination, I mean that the animal spirits which make the traces are too agitated in relation to the consistency of the brain fibers.

By *capacious* imagination, I mean an abundance of spirits capable of keeping open several brain traces at one time.

By *governed* imagination, I mean that neither passions nor some other accident have broken or penetrated any fiber of the brain's principal part, which must obey the attention of the mind.

By a *visionary*, I mean a man in whom attention determines the course of the spirits toward truth, but in whom it cannot gauge well the strength, or restrain the movement of those spirits. Thus a visionary thinks on those things he wills to consider, but he sees nothing as it is. For, the traces being either too wide or too deep, he sees nothing in its natural condition. We must always cut his remarks down to size somewhat. Everyone is in this sense a visionary on some subject; those who are least-so, are the most wise.

By *insane*, I mean a person whose attention can neither restrain nor control the course of the spirits.

By *contagious and dominant* imagination, I mean such a surplus of animal spirits, and those so agitated, that they spread throughout the body and chiefly over the face, giving it an expression of confidence which impresses other people. Everyone, when moved by passion, and visionaries at all times, have a contagious and dominant imagination.

VIII. Since the substance and disposition of the brain fibers vary in different people, and in the same people at different ages, and since the animal spirits may be more or less subtle, more or less abundant, more or less agitated, we can easily see that there are many sorts of imagination I have not covered here, and that there are not even enough terms exactly to mark their differences. For the word 'imagination' is only an abbreviated expression for many ideas, but moreover, for an infinite number of relationships resulting from the comparisons among those ideas – which relationships make up the special character of imaginings. The brain alone, disposed in this or that way, and considered without relationship to any movement – to abundance, to the solidity of the spirits, cannot make any imagining whatsoever. Rather, it is the relation resulting from the quality of the spirits and the substance of the brain fibers. For whoever has a great abundance of greatly agitated and strong spirits, does not for those reasons have a lively and capacious imagination, unless, in addition, the brain fibers are too solid, too moist, too interconnected with each other.

IX. Supposing these truths, I say that the imagination has effects as dangerous as those of the senses, and that therefore it is necessary to keep them silent in order for grace to work in us according to its efficacy.

X. For, first, imagination, as well as the senses, only speaks for the body, since naturally, everything which comes to the mind by way of the body is only

for the body. This is a great principle.

XI. Second, imagination continually interrupts the mind, whenever it is heated up, and it often forces the mind to reply to it and to discuss things with it at the expense of Reason. Moreover, we can easily avoid the action of sensible objects, and quiet the senses. For it is up to us to close our eyes, or to run away. But we cannot easily dissipate the phantoms which excite our imagination, and it is a necessity that the mind must contemplate everything which occurs in the brain.

XII. Third, the senses represent sensible objects quite naturally. But the imagination stretches or enlarges them, embellishes them or makes them deformed and terrible, such that the mind is often greatly charmed or greatly terrified by them. Such a person has his heart corrupted by unruly desires excited only by imagination, so that he can only relieve himself of these desires by fulfilling them. The momentary enjoyment of the object of these disorders, by which he has consummated his crime, at least delivers him for a brief time from a passion which owes to imagination all of its strength and all of its outburst.

XIII. Fourth, the senses only attach themselves to particular objects around us, which are on their threshold. But the imagination makes the mind a slave to everything. It joins the mind the past, present, and future; to realities and chimeras; to possible beings, and to those even God could not create and the mind could not comprehend. It draws terrible phantoms from its own resources, and then is terrified by them. It brings pleasing objects into being, and then enjoys them. It changes and destroys the natures of all beings, and shapes a thousand extravagant plans in the world it has composed out of realities and pure phantasies.

XIV. Finally, the imagination, without going all the way to insanity, still upsets and scatters genuine ideas and corrupts the heart in an infinite number of ways. It would take too long to explain the different effects of the various sorts of imagination. But the effect most opposed to the efficacy of the grace of Jesus Christ is that one popularly called 'sophistication.'[2] For the more learned the imagination, the more it is to be feared. Finesse, delicacy, vivacity, an extensive imagination – all great qualities in men's eyes – are at the same time the most general and fecund principles for blinding the mind and corrupting the heart. Since I am advancing a paradox, I should not be believed without giving proof of this:

XV. The mind can only be reasonable through Reason; it can only be governed by Order. It can only derive perfection from its immediate and direct union with God. On the other hand, its union with the body fills it with shadows and throws it into disorder because at present that union cannot be augmented without diminishing the other union which is opposed to it. Now, it is by way of imagination that the mind comes to spread itself out to creatures, just as it is only by way of ideas pure and exempt from phantoms that it is joined to the truth. Thus, the more strength, vivacity and extension the imagination has, the more the mind is occupied with sense objects. I have already said all of this. But

when the imagination is attractive, agreeable, accomplished, sharp and lively, then its phantoms are lively, animated, agreeable, always easy-going or even better than that. Therefore a person who, by the strength of his imagination can generate a thousand different objects in his mind, who regularly dreams up stylist phantoms and gives them calculated movements so as to strike the whole brain agreeably, such a person, I say, finds himself charmed by his own efforts and instead of contemplating things in themselves, such as they are made known by their ideas, takes continuous pleasure in entertaining himself and then applauding the fictions of his own mind.

XVI. Everyone naturally seeks approval, and the sophisticated person never lacks it. When he speaks, and because he speaks well, everyone listens with pleasure; since he advances only certain sense-truths, which are in reality falsehoods (for that which is true to the senses is false to the mind), everyone applauds him. But a man who knows, or rather, who feels, by the way people look at him, that they admire, love, honor and revere him, can he then distrust these thoughts, persuade himself that he is mistaken, and not tie himself, not merely to his own enchanting visions, but to this world which applauds him, these friends who caress him, these disciples who adore him? Can he be directly united to God, having so many bonds and relations to creatures?

XVII. I admit that the sophisticate can be a man of honor; but he can still be a hypocrite, and there are at least as many with that trait as any other. He may have no vices, I grant; yet there are others who are debauched, and a large number of them at that. Certainly the sophisticate holds to this world by an infinity of ways, for how could he be dead concerning this world when it so obviously lives for him? The sophisticate is constantly agitated by movements of vanity, and all his dealings only serve to provoke in him the concupiscence of pride. The sophisticate – I mean chiefly the sophisticate who lives in the environment of a select world, who constantly tends to take up an advantageous position in others' minds, or who by the reputation he has already made for himself has really become the slave of those who regard him as master – this sophisticate, I say, is thereby separated from God more so than others, and there seems to be no way back. Even if the delight of grace were spread through his heart ten times a day, it would find his heart full of feelings and movements which would smother it. Even if the light of reason should enlighten his mind and dispel its phantoms, his imagination would easily be able to reproduce them. There are too many chains to break and ropes to cut, to free this captive. But this captive loves his chains. He does not feel his servitude; he glories in it.

XVIII. A debauched person is not therefore in a state of debauchery every moment. The blood and humors could not keep him in such a state permanently, and when the ferment ceases, the debauched person is ashamed of his disordered behavior. But the blood does furnish enough spirits to maintain the concupiscence of pride. Then what time would be favorable for the efficacy of grace? A hypocrite continually has remorse which troubles and disquiets him, but the sophisticate has no remorse. Is it a crime, he will say, to be sophisticated and merit the esteem of worldly men? It is not a crime to be spirited, but it is an

error to mistake imagination for spiritedness. It is nowhere near a crime to merit the esteem of others; but it is an illusion to imagine that we have merited it. Not only is it an illusion to think we merit esteem for having an abundance of animal spirits in our heads, or for having a good balance between brain fibers and spirits, which together go to constitute sophistication – but it is an illusion to claim merit even for being united to Reason in the purest and most direct manner possible. In the eyes of the One who alone knows how to understand and reward merit, we earn it only by conformity to Order, by good use of our freedom, a use which can only be well-governed with the help of grace, and of which anyone who glorifies himself over it can only lose merit because he does not render to God the glory due Him. Has God created other men to occupy themselves with us, to love us, to turn toward us and admire us, run after us, become bound to us? Certainly God wants to be adored by His creatures. But what does that mean – adored? That we prostrate ourselves before altars, burn incense in abundance, mix voices with instruments to fill the churches with agreeable melodies composed to praise Him? Doubtless, no. God is spirit, and He wills to be adored in spirit and in truth. He wants the whole man, his thoughts, movements and actions. But the sophisticate, more than any other, attracts glances and fixates other mens' movements around himself. Instead of himself taking the posture of one who adores, and thereby turning minds and hearts toward the One who should be adored, he elevates himself in mens' minds. He takes the place of honor. He even goes into the Sanctuary of the sacred Temple, the abode of the living God, and in the pomp and circumstance with which he surrounds himself, prostrates weak imaginations at his own feet, making a veritable worship of himself, a spiritual worship, a worship due only to God.

XIX. But could a person who seeks men's esteem and steals from God what He esteems most in His creatures, attract the graces of Heaven to himself? *God who resists the vainglorious* [*I Peter* 5] – will He resist the sophisticate's benedictions? The spirit of God rests freely upon the humble and those the world scorns; these are certain truths of Scripture. He enlightens those who go back into themselves, as experience teaches. But He blinds these lively and dazzling imaginations which constantly spread themselves over the world outside of themselves; for truth dwells within us. Moreover, grace, whether it be of light or of feeling, has no effect in the hearts or minds of those who unite themselves to everything around them. This is evident from what I have just said. The sophisticate who seeks glory will only find it vain and transient, and will fall forever with the prideful spirits into the ignominy which is his due.

XX. But this beauty of spirit, as fatal to those who possess it and who glorify themselves in it, is even more dangerous to those who esteem and admire it without possessing it; this is a truth we need to know. Nothing is more contagious than imagination; and those who have it in lively and dominant ways are the masters of those who fixedly gaze at them. Their expressions and manners exude conviction and certitude to all who look at them; for they are impassioned about everything, in such a lively way that if we do not go back

into ourselves to compare what they say to the responses of the inner truth (which is quite difficult to do in their presence), we take in their feelings, not only without examining any proofs for them, but even without understanding those feelings. We are left convinced, yet without knowing precisely of what it is that we are convinced, because we are struck, dazzled, dominated.

XXI. Nevertheless we must realize that, of all men, those who are the most subject to error and whose feelings are the most dangerous, whose movements are the least governed, are the ones who have lively and dominant imaginations. For the more the brain is filled with spirits, the more the imagination revolts, the more the passions are animated, the more the body speaks out. And the body never speaks except in its own behalf, to unite and subjugate the mind to itself and separate it from the One who alone can give the soul the perfection of which it is capable. Therefore we must work to silence our imagination, and be on guard against those who flatter and excite it. As far as possible, we must avoid intercourse with the world. For when concupiscence, be it of pride or of pleasure, is momentarily excited, grace does not operate in us with all its efficacy.

XXII. Finally, man is subject to two sorts of concupiscence: that of pleasures, and that of loftiness or greatness. People do not give this enough thought. When a man enjoys sensible pleasures, his imagination is polluted; and carnal concupiscence excites and fortifies it. So too, when he spreads himself out to the world, seeks status, makes friends, acquires a reputation, then his idea of himself expands and inflates his imagination, and the concupiscence of pride is renewed and augmented. It is only natural that the brain should have traces for maintaining civil society and for working to establish our fortune, just as there are traces for the conservation of life and the propagation of the species. We are united to other men in a thousand ways, as really as we are to our bodies; and at present all union to creatures disunites us from God, because the brain's traces are no longer subject to our wills.

XXIII. Everyone easily recognizes that form of misgovernment of the soul which is due to carnal concupiscence. We are alarmed about it, hold it in some horror, and to some extent we avoid whatever inflames it. But there are very few who seriously reflect on concupiscence of pride, and who are apprehensive about arousing or augmenting it. We all indiscreetly abandon ourselves to intercourse with the world and fearlessly embark on that stormy sea, as St. Augustine called it.[3] We let ourselves be led by the sophisticate who reigns here, we aspire to greatness and pursue glory. What is the way to remain unmoved amid this flood tide of people around us, who insult us if they leave us behind? Finally, we 'make a name for ourselves', but a name which makes us more of a slave the more we do to 'make' it, since it is a name which ties us directly to creatures and separates us from the Creator – a name illustrious in the esteem of men, but a name of pride, which God will bring down.

NOTES

1. See *Search After Truth*, Bks. II and V.
2. M. may have in mind either *De l'esprit* or *Des agrémens* by the Chevalier de Méré. But a more likely source is *Les entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène*, by Bouhours (ed. 1682, Lyon), esp. pp. 264–266 & 282.
3. *De beata vita* I.1

Chapter Thirteen

On the passions. What they are. Their dangerous effects. We must moderate them. Conclusion of the first part of this Treatise.

I. The senses, imagination and passions always go together; they cannot be examined and condemned separately. What I have said of the senses and imagination, of course, applies to the passions also. Hence what I am about to say can easily be gauged from what I have already said. I would like only to explain at slightly greater length what I have had to say so far only briefly, the gradual nature of these explanations being due to the close union of our facilities.

II. By passions I do not mean the senses which produce them, nor the imagination which excites and sustains them. I mean[1] the movement of the soul and of the spirits caused by the senses or imagination, where the movement produced then turns about and acts on the cause which produced it. For all this is nothing but a continual circulation of feelings and movements which sustain and reproduce themselves. If the senses produce the passions, the passions in exchange unite the senses to their objects by way of the movement those passions excite in the body. If the imagination excites passions, they in turn, by the reaction of the spirits' movement, arouse the imagination; and each of these is sustained or produced by the effect of which it is the cause, so admirable is the economy of the human body and the interconnection of all the parts of which it is composed. This deserves to be explained at greater length, because of the consequences we must draw from it.

III. The passions are movements of the soul which accompany those of the spirits and blood, and which produce all the dispositions necessary to sustain the cause which gave birth to them, all this because of the construction of the machine.[2] Upon seeing an object which strikes the soul, supposing this object to be a good, two courses or discharges of the brain's animal spirits are brought into play toward the parts of the body: some are spread or tend to be spread throughout the exterior members – the feet and arms or, if these are out of commission, into the lungs and voice organs, in order to dispose us and those around us to unite us to the object. The other group of animal spirits gets into the nerves connecting to the heart, lungs, liver and other parts of the viscera in order to proportion the fermentation and course of the blood and humors in response to the present good. In this way, the trace formed in the brain by the presence of the good or by our imagination, which trace determines these two

discharges of the spirits, is sustained by the new spirits which the second discharge hastens to supply to the brain by way of repeated and violent jolts by which they shake the nerves surrounding the vessels containing the humors and blood, materials out of which the spirits are constantly being formed.

IV. Since all parts must be filled with spirits, from the source of the nerves in the brain to the nerves' extremities, and since the trace of this good forcefully spreads spirits throughout all parts of the body to give them a violent and extraordinary movement, or to make them take up a strained posture, it is necessary that the blood abundantly and promptly mount to the head by way of the action of the nerves around the head, which contract and dilate the vessels containing the blood. Otherwise, if the brain were not spreading enough spirits out to the members of the body, we could not long maintain the expression, posture and movement we need to acquire the good or to flee an evil. We would fall into a faint, for that always happens when the brain is lacking in spirits, which lack breaks the communication it has by their help with the other parts of the body.

V. Thus man's body is an admirable machine, composed of an infinity of canals and reservoirs which are all inter-connected in an infinity of ways. And the marvelous working of this machinery depends solely on the course of the spirits, which is determined variously by the springs which are flexed and apertures which are opened and closed movement of the principal part of the brain. The latter movement depends in part on the will, and in part on the course of the spirits, excited by the traces of imagination and memory.

VI. But of chief importance here is the fact that the course of the spirits through the nerves which connect with the viscera and make the blood mount to the head to furnish it with the spirits needed to dispose the outward parts of the body in response to the present object – that that course should 'act selectively,' so to speak, so as to furnish the brain with only those humors required to conserve the trace which excites the passion. Or, to put it another way, since it is of no great consequence which order is emphasized, the blood and humors which mount to the head should be divided up in such a way that those required to form the spirits agreeable to the dominant passion should remain there, and the rest should return via circulation to the places from which they came. But having been formed, these spirits are first determined toward the trace which was the original cause of all this commotion, in order to sustain it and to arouse all thoSe accessory traces able and to arouse all those accessory traces able to fortify it. And it is from this trace and its accessory traces that new spirits receive their direction, and are determined, as were the first ones, again into two discharges – one toward the outside and the other inside the body. For as long as a passion lasts, it constantly brings about this admirable circulation of spirits and blood, and this circulation sets the machine to operating in response to the object present to the senses or imagination, all with a marvelous order and accuracy.

VII. From this it is clear that whereas the passions are very wisely established in relation to their proper end, which is to gain the conservation of

health and life, the union of man and woman, society, commerce, the acquisition of [sensible] goods [of the senses], by contrast they are extremely contrary to the acquisition of true goods, goods of the spirit, goods due to virtue and merit.

VIII. For

(1) they are not at all subject to our wills. Nothing is more difficult than to moderate them, because of our loss of the power we would need to have over our bodies – a loss due to sin.

(2) [3] Every movement which they naturally excite in the soul is only for the good of the body, according to this maxim: everything happening to the mind by way of the body is only for the sake of the body.

(3) When they are excited, they take over all the capacity of the mind and heart. The traces and the shaking of the brain which they sustain by the contributions they draw from the viscera, and which they promptly and abundantly send up to the head, disturb our ideas. Further, the shake and movement they give to the will by the lively feeling which accompanies them, corrupts our hearts and makes us fall into a thousand disorders.

(4) But when they cease to agitate us, the imagination remains polluted by the traces they have made in the brain, whose fibers have been either bent or broken by the violence of the spirits they set into motion. These traces often dissipate the mind's attention and ordinarily renew the passions which produce them, if the blood is recharged by particles appropriate to this sort of fermentation, so that the blood can furnish in abundance spirits agreeable to those passions.

(5) By their rapid flow, the passions make a smooth and wide trail through the nerves running to the heart and other interior parts, in order to excite movements in those places appropriate to their own rebirth, the result being that the least thing shaking the brain is capable of renewing them.

(6) Finally, all the passions justify themselves in a way which, while they are acting on the mind, makes it impossible to reach solid judgments about the object exciting them, for their malignity is such that they are never satisfied when reason fails to yield judgments in their favor.

IX. This is because

(1) they make the judgment of the senses to be valued, though the latter are false witnesses and are far from being able to pass as judges when compared with Reason.

(2) Also, they make objects known only from the false and deceitful side, the one which suits them.

(3) They arouse those traces and accessory ideas which serve their interests, and silence all the rest.

(4) They disguise their misgoverned conduct and criminal plans with honorable appearances of reason, justice and virtue. For example, the greedy man hides his shame, injustice and cruelty from himself. He disguises his passion with thoughts of temperance, moderation, prudence, penitence and perhaps even of charity, generosity or lavishness – all by

the use of imaginary plans which he will never carry out. For the passions have enough skill to make serve as justifications even those virtues opposed to them. Finally, the passions are always accompanied by a certain feeling of mildness which corrupts their judge and pays him well if he will favor them. On the other hand, they cruelly mistreat him if he condemns them to death. What gift could be offered more agreeable or charming than pleasure, to creatures who invincibly will to be happy, if it is momentary pleasure which makes us momentarily happy? And what treatment is more rude than that which the passions give to the mind, when it wants to sacrifice them to the love of Order? It is certain that we cannot repel them without getting hurt. For when they are on the defensive, the very blow we aim at them, which rarely kills them, kills us on recoil, or rather reduces us to a state which seems to us worse than death itself.

X. Therefore it is clear that those who, far from moderating their passions, make every effort to satisfy them, who live by their humors, act on impulse, judge everything by fantasies, who, in a word, follow all the movements of their machine and let themselves be led without knowing who leads them or where they are being led, constantly alienate themselves from their true good, gradually lose sight of it, even erase their memories of it, and run like the blind to fall into the abyss where all evils are found and where all goods are eternally absent.

XI. It is true that sometimes grace is strong enough to stop short a person who has abandoned himself to the movements of his passions, and that God, out of goodness, thunders, enlightens and speaks to the mind in a terrible voice which turns back both the man and the passion which was carrying him down. But Jesus Christ rarely does such favors; and anyone who, while throwing himself over the precipice, expects God to perform a miracle to save him from death, is quite insane.

XII. But what can we do to moderate the passions? I have already spoken of this in the seventh chapter and elsewhere, but here are a few words on the subject:

(1) We must avoid objects which excite them, and mortify our senses.

(2) We must hold our imagination to that respect it owes to reason, or else constantly keep our animal spirits in a state of revulsion lest they sustain criminal traces by their coursing.

(3) We must seek the means to ridicule and scorn our passions, to enlighten them by the light, hold them up to order, and by an effort of the mind discover the shame, injustice and derangement in them, the unhappy consequences they have both for this life and the next.

(4) Formulate no plans when they are excited, and never take the first step in any matter when under their direction or inspiration.[4]

(5) Make it a habit and a law to consult Reason in all things; and when we have failed because of surprise or some other eventuality, change our conduct and at least bear the shame we merit for having acted as animals

due to the construction and movement of our machines, rather than justifying one foolish step by continuing in unjust and criminal conduct.

(6) Work to augment the *strength* and the *freedom* of our minds in order to support the effort of attention and to suspend consent until evidence carries us to it. Without these two qualities we cannot receive from Reason sure rules for our conduct.

Finally, in order to follow these rules which destroy the passions, we must above all have recourse to prayer, and with confidence and humility approach the One who has come to deliver us by the strength of His grace from this body of death, from that law of the flesh which is always rebelling against the law of the spirit. For reason alone, and all the means Philosophy furnishes, cannot deliver us from the malign influence of the first Adam without the influence of the second Adam, as I have said so many times and do not fear repeating, since I do not get the impression that this is too often the subject of thought.

XIII. Here then, in general, are the elements of the first part of this essay on Ethics: First I showed that *virtue* consists precisely in *the habitual and dominant love of immutable Order*. Then I spoke of the two principal qualities needed for the acquisition of virtue, viz. the *strength* and *freedom* of the mind. After that I explained the *occasional* causes of the *light* and of *feelings*, without which graces we neither acquire nor conserve the love of Order. And finally, I explained the *occasional causes of certain feelings contrary to those of grace*, which diminish its efficacy, so that they might be avoided. Thus I do not believe that I have forgotten anything which is in general needed for acquiring and conserving virtue. I come then to the second part, which is to be not about the *virtues*, but about the *duties* of virtue. For I recognize only one, unique virtue, which makes solidly virtuous those who possess it – and that is the dominant love of immutable order.

NOTES

1. Cf. Descartes, *Passions of the Soul*, art. XXVII. Cf. also Senault, *De l'usage des passions*, Paris, 1664, pp. 16–17; and Ameline, *Traité de la volonté* ..., Paris, 1684, I/7, pp. 37–38.
2. Cf. Descartes, *Passions*, arts. XXXVII–XXXVIII.
3. The edition of 1684 had (2) as follows: "They are so contrary to virtue and merit that they must be sacrificed and annihilated, in order to merit the name and reward of a solidly virtuous man or perfect Christian." M. eliminated this in all later editions, and renumbered (3) of 1684 to (2) here.
4. Concerning (3) and (4), cf. Descartes' *Passions*, art. CCXI.

PART TWO

On Duties

Chapter One

The just often do wicked deeds. Love of Order must be enlightened if it is to be well-governed. Three conditions for making an action perfectly virtuous. We must study the duties of man in general, and take time each day while so doing, particularly to examine the order and circumstances of duties.

I. Not all the acts of solidly virtuous people are, for that reason, solidly virtuous acts. Some defect is almost always found, or else some imperfection; often there are even real sins. The reason for this is that man does not always act under the influence of a dominant habit, but instead by the activity of a passion temporarily excited. Thus, if a dominant habit is sleeping, so to speak, and the others are awake, the acts of a good man could be criminal in several ways. Moreover, though the dominant habit of love of Order may be excited in a just man at a particular time, it could still happen at that same moment that he might do something defective or imperfect, even directly opposed to the Order he is then loving and intending to follow. For in addition to the difficulty of giving exact obedience to known Order, often an indiscreet and badly governed zeal makes us act against Order not known. Therefore, in order for an act to be virtuous in every way, it isn't enough that it proceed from a good man, nor from a man presently moved by love; in addition, the action must conform to Order under all circumstances. And this must be so, not be some sort of chance, which luckily determines some present motion of the soul, but rather [it must be] due to the strength of Reason guiding us in such a way that we fulfill all our duties.

II. Also, though it does suffice that the love of Order be our dominant habit for us to be just and agreeable in the sight of God, still in order to become perfect we must go further, and know how to govern that love by means of an exact knowledge of our duties. We could even say that whoever neglects or scorns such knowledge does not have an upright heart, no matter how much zeal he feels for Order. For Order wants to be loved by reason, and not just by the ardor of an instinct which often fills overly-lively imaginings with indiscreet zeal, nor just by all those who, wholly unaccustomed to turning within themselves, are always taking the secret inspirations of their passions for the infallible replies of inner truth.

III. It is true that those who have such weak minds and strong passions as never to be in any state of self-counsel, or even of taking counsel from the One who enlightens all men, are excusable before God, providing that they ask in good faith for opinions from those whom they believe to be the best and most wise people, and follow those opinions. But those with something of a mind, or

with enough vanity to pride themselves on having one, are criminal before God if they undertake some plan without consulting it, – I mean, without consulting Reason, however ardent may be the zeal which transports them. For we must accustom ourselves to differentiating the replies of the inner truth which enlightens the mind by the evidence of its lights, from [those of] the language and secret inspirations of the passions which trouble and seduce it by vivid and agreeable feelings themselves always obscure and confused.

IV. Love of order, then, requires three conditions, if an act is to conform to it: First, we must examine the action itself, and all of its attendant circumstances, as much as we are able to do. Second, suspend consent until evidence tips the scales, or else suspend carrying out the act until necessity forbids further postponement. Third, we should obey known Order promptly, exactly, and inviolably. The *strength* of the mind should make us courageously carry out the effort of attention. The *freedom* of the mind should arrest and wisely govern our desire to consent. The *submissiveness* of the mind should make it follow the light step by step, without either jumping ahead of it or straying away from it. And the *love of Order* should animate these three powers through which – however hidden at the bottom of the heart – that love is able to appear to the eyes of the world and sanctify all our steps before God.

V. But is it not possible for someone uninstructed in morality to be able to recognize the Order of his duties in unforeseen circumstances, no matter how much strength or freedom of mind he might have. Therefore, he must forestall those occasions where time does not permit any examination, and instruct himself, through wise foresight, about his duties in general, and about those incontestable principles by which he ought to govern his conduct on particular occasions. This study of our duties, without a doubt, ought to be preferred to any other, for its end and reward is eternity. A person who applies himself to languages, mathematics or business, instead of studying the general rules of his conduct, resembles a senseless traveller who simply amuses himself, perhaps loses his way, and then is overtaken by nightfall. But in this case it is an eternal night, which will deprive him forever of a home in his own country, will fill him with an immortal despair, and leave him exposed to the terrible wrath of the Lamb, to the power of demons, or rather to the justice of an avenging God.

VI. Anyone who might wish to undertake detailed examination of all our duties in all situations would be undertaking a task which could never be accomplished, however tireless he might be. For myself, I do not feel that I have the strength for such a vast and difficult job; thus what I intend to do now is to mark off, in a general way, those duties man should render to God, to his neighbor and to himself, insofar as this can be done. Every person must examine his own particular duties with reference to these general and essential obligations, and also according to the changing circumstances of the moment. Some time must be taken every day for this purpose, rather than expecting to find it in books or through other men with as much surety and as much light as we will find within ourselves when we faithfully consult the inner Truth in good faith and in the movement of the love of Order.

Chapter Two

Our duties to God should be related to His attributes – His power, His wisdom and His love. God alone is the real cause of all things. The duties we must render to His power, which consist chiefly in clear judgments and in movements governed by these judgments.

I. Necessary and immutable Order requires that the creature depends on the Creator, that all expression is related to this model, and that man, made in the image of God, live subject to God, united to God, like unto God in all possible ways. [Man is] *subject* to His power, *united* to His wisdom, and *perfectly likened* to Him in all movements of his heart. *Be ye perfect*, Jesus Christ said to His disciples [*Matt.* 5:48]. It is true that we shall not be really similar to God, that rather than being wholly absorbed in contemplation of His essence, we shall be wholly penetrated by His lights and His pleasures. But [this sort of perfection] is that toward which we should tend. It is that for which the faith gives us a right to hope; it is that to which it leads us, it is that which it begins to bring about by the inner reformation which the grace of Jesus Christ is working within us. For faith guides us to awareness of the truth, and earns charity for us. But awareness and charity are the two essential traits that reform minds according to the One who speaks of truth and charity in the holy Scriptures. *My dearly beloved*, says St. John [*I. John* 3:2], *we are already the children of God, but what we shall be one day does not yet appear. Still we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like unto Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And all those who have this hope are sanctified to become holy as He is holy. Blessed*, says Jesus Christ himself [*Matt.* 5:8], *are those with a pure heart, for they shall see God.*

II. In order to discover the duties we should render to God, we must attentively consider all His essential attributes, and consult ourselves in relation to them. Above all, we must examine His power, His wisdom and His love; and, on our part, our judgments and movements. For it is only by judgments and movements that minds render what they owe to God; [this is] that spiritual worship which God, *Who is spirit* [*John* 4:24], requires from us. And it is uniquely because of the power, wisdom and love of God that we indispensably owe Him three great duties.

III. When thinking of God, if we see only one reality or one infinite perfection, we still realize easily that Order wants us to esteem God infinitely. But from that alone we do not necessarily judge that we would have to adore Him,

fear Him, love Him with a love of union, hope in Him, and so on. God, considered only in Himself, without relation to us, does not excite those movements of the soul which transport it toward the good or the cause of its happiness, and which give it the dispositions appropriate for receiving those gifts from Him. Nothing is more clear than that infinitely perfect Being should be infinitely esteemed. No mind could refuse God this speculative duty, for it consists of nothing but a simple judgment which we cannot suspend once the evidence is complete. Even the impious, those who have no religion at all, those who deny providence, willingly render this duty to God. But because they imagine that God does not mix in human affairs and that He is not the real and immediate cause of all that is done here below, that we could have some sort of commerce, or society, or union with Him without either Reason or some power in some way common [with Him], they [therefore] brutally follow all the agreeable movements of their passions, and render to a blind nature the duties and attention which are deserved solely by the wisdom and power of the Creator.

IV. These impious people reason consistently enough, but they sin in their first principle. And we cannot easily get them to understand that God requires duties from His creature, until we disabuse them of the false maxims of which they are full – for example, 'that if God were mixing in our affairs, then the world would not go as it goes'; 'that injustice would not be on the throne, nor bodies so irregularly arranged as they are'; 'that the world, disfigured as it is, could not be the work of any but a blind nature'; 'that God does not require from us, mere vile creatures, honors worthy of Himself'; 'that what might seem just to us is not in itself just at all, or is not just before God Who, if this [maxim] were so, would often punish someone He should have rewarded – for sometimes the worst misfortunes surprise us at the same time we are doing good works'. Elsewhere I have refuted these false principles; and if what I am about to say is not clear, one might read what I have written about Providence in the *Dialogues on Metaphysics* and in *Christian Meditations*.

V. So, to recognize our duties in their principle, it is not enough to consider infinitely perfect Being without any relation to ourselves. On the contrary, we must above all be careful to note that we depend on the *power* of God, that we are united to His *wisdom*, and that we move only by way of His spirit, by the *love* he bears toward Himself. [First,] we depend on the *power* of God. For we exist only through it; we only act by way of it; we cannot do anything except by it. [Second,] we are united to the *wisdom* of God. For only by it are we enlightened; only by it do we discover truth; we are reasonable only by it, which alone is the universal Reason of intelligent beings. Finally, we have no movement except by the Divine spirit, by its *love*. For just as God acts only by His will, [i.e.] acts only by the love He bears toward Himself, so all our love for the good is only an effusion, or an impression from the love by which God loves Himself. We invincibly and naturally love nothing but God, because we love and are only able to love nothing except the good. And the good, by which I mean the cause of happiness, can be found only in God, no creature being able

to act by itself within minds. We shall have to explain all of this at greater length, in order to draw from it the rules of our conduct. I begin, then, with *power*, and the duties we are to render to it.

VI. Glory and Honor belong to God alone. Toward Him alone, all the movements of all minds ought to tend, because only in Him does *power* reside. All willing by creatures is inefficacious by itself. Only He who gives being could be able to give the ways of being, since the ways of being are nothing but beings themselves, in this or that fashion. Nothing is more evident to one who knows how to consult the inner truth. For what is more evident than that if God, for example, keeps a body always in one place, then no creature could move it to another? Or that no man could even move his own arm unless God wills to concur in doing that which ungrateful and stupid man thinks he is doing by himself? And the same goes for the ways of being of minds. If God keeps or creates the soul in a way of being which afflicts it, such as with pain, no mind can deliver itself therefrom, nor make itself to feel pleasure thereby, unless God concurs with it to carry out its desires. And it is by this concord and wholly divine liberality, that God shares with creatures something of His glory, His grandeur, and His power, without losing any of His power, or diminishing anything of His grandeur, or curtailing any of His glory. *I am Lord, this is my name, I do not yield my glory to any other.* [*Isaiah* 42:8]

VII. God has subjected this present world to the Angels: they act, and it is God who does all. God has given to Jesus Christ, as Head of the Church, sovereign power over all nations of the earth. It is He who obtains true goods for us. But God alone distributes them; He alone acts in souls; He alone breaks the hardness of hearts.[1] Jesus-Christ-as-man prays, intercedes, desires, fills the office of Advocate, mediator, sovereign Priest. But only God works. God alone has *power*. He alone is cause and principle of all things; He alone should also be the end. It is to God that all movements of minds should tend; to Him alone glory and honor belong. Such is the eternal, necessary and inviolable law which God has established by the necessity of His being, by the necessary love He bears toward Himself, love always conforming to Order and which even makes Order the inviolable law of all minds. When God shall cease to know Himself as He is, when He shall cease to love Himself as much as He deserves, when He shall cease acting according to His lights and by the movement of His love, when He shall cease following this law, then we might with impunity desire glory, or render it to someone other than to Him; then might we rejoice and be consoled in the friendships of creatures without fear. Then might we love and be loved, adore and be adored, and show ourselves to the world to attract its esteem and love. Then might we be raised up and be placed on view like an object worthy of occupying the minds and hearts which God has made only for Himself; then might we be occupied with ourselves, either by ourselves or by way of the imaginary power of creatures.

VIII. It is beyond doubt, and nothing is more Christian, nor more reasonable, than this principle: *that God alone does all, that He communicates His power to creatures only by establishing them as occasional causes, to act through them*

in a manner which bears the mark of an infinite wisdom, an immutable nature and a universal cause, such that all glory earned by a creature's labor redounds uniquely to the Creator, the creatures working with a power not their own, and by designs formed before their births. What is more holy than this principle, which makes clearly understandable to those capable of hearing it, that while we are often permitted to approach the objects of our senses by the movement of our bodies, we must reserve for God all the movements of our souls? Now, we can and many times should approach the *occasional* causes of our feelings, but we should never love them. We can bind ourselves to other men, but ought not adore them as goods by directing our love toward them, or as capable of doing any good to us. We must love and fear only the *genuine* cause of goods and evils, we must love and fear only God in creatures. Blessed is he who puts his trust in God, and cursed be he who puts his confidence in man [*Jer.* XVII:5].

IX. Apparently that was the philosophy of the generous Mordechai, and was the advice he gave to his dear adopted daughter Esther. For the Jews had a more holy philosophy than that left to us by the pagans. Certainly it was in a movement conforming to the principles of this philosophy that Esther made this prayer to God, exposing to Him her heart's true feelings: *Deliver us, Lord, by the strength of your arm, and succor me, who seeks only in Thee for the help I need. Lord, who penetrates our hearts, you know how I hate the glory of the wicked, and how I detest the bed of the uncircumcised, and of all those not of my nation. You know that for me it is an unhappy necessity which I hold in abomination, to wear the crown on the days when I appear in public, for it is a fatal mark of my grandeur and glory. Lord, I am extremely horrified by it, and never wear it when by myself. I have never eaten at the table of Aman, and have never taken pleasure even in the banquets of the King. Your servant has never had any joy except in you, Lord God of Abraham, from the time I was carried here until now.* This great Queen calls God as her witness, *that she has never had any joy except in Him.* Though she was wife of a Prince who commanded one hundred twenty-seven provinces, though living amidst pleasures, she had nothing but contempt for her grandeur, and horror for the delights of a voluptuous heart. She remained immobile in the midst of many temptations, and only God is the object of all her soul's movements. *[I] never had any joy except in you, Lord God of Abraham.* What firmness of mind, what grandeur of soul! That is what God's law teaches. But it is also what demonstrates the principle that only God does all, and that creatures are only the *occasional* causes of the glitter which seems to surround them, and of the pleasures they seem to give forth. But we must explicate in some detail the duties we ought to render to the power which is found only in God.

X. All our duties consist in nothing but judgments and movements of the soul, as I have already said. *For God is spirit, and He wants to be adored in spirit and in truth* [*John* IV:24]. And all exterior acts are only consequences of the acts of our minds.

This clear perception, *that God alone has power*, obliges us to form the

following judgments:

1. That only God is true cause of our being.
2. That only He is cause of the duration of our being, or [i.e.] our time.
3. That only He is cause of our understandings.
4. That only He is cause of natural movements, of our willing.
5. That only He is cause of our feelings – pleasure, pain, hunger, thirst, etc.
6. That only He is cause of all movements of our bodies.
7. That neither men, nor Angels, nor demons, nor any creature can do us either good or evil by themselves. That nevertheless as *occasional* causes, they can determine God, *as a consequence of certain general laws*, to do good and evil to us by means of the bodies with which we are united.
8. That neither are we able to do good or evil to anyone by our own strengths, but only to oblige God, by our practical desires, and as a consequences of the laws of body-soul union, to do good or evil to other men. For it is we who will to move our arm or tongue, but it is only God who knows how and is able to move them.

XI. *These judgments require from us the following movements:*

1. To love only God with *love as union*, or attachment, since He alone is cause of our happiness, large or small, fleeting or enduring. I say *love as union* – for we ought to love our neighbor, not as our good or cause of happiness, but as capable of enjoying that same happiness with us. The word *love* is equivocal, and we must be careful in using it.
2. To take joy in God alone. For the one who rejoices in something else is judging that that other thing can make him happy; but that is a false judgment, which can only lead to a disordered kind of movement.
3. Never to be united to the *occasional* causes of our happiness as if they were vindicated by the *real* cause; for that would oblige God to serve iniquity as a consequence of His laws.
4. Not to be united to the occasional causes of our happiness without a particular need. For the sinner ought to avoid pleasures, since pleasures make us presently happy and happiness is a reward which the sinner does not deserve. Otherwise the pleasure we enjoy on the occasion of the body's union [with our souls] will fortify concupiscence, disturb the mind and corrupt the heart in a thousand ways. This latter is the principle of the necessity of penitence.
5. To fear only God, since only God can punish us. We must fear God in this life, so as not to offend Him at all. The happy day will come when, all sin banished, all fear will also be banished.
6. To be sad only about our sin, since only sin obliges a just God to make us unhappy. Whoever becomes sad at the loss of a false good renders honor to it and regards it as if it were a true good. And whoever becomes sad at misfortune which he cannot remedy is chagrinned in vain. Enlightened self-love is saddened only by its own disorders, and charity only [saddened] by those of others.

XII. Though only God can make us unhappy, we should not hate Him, but

must fear him. Only someone hardened in sin could, by self-love, hate God. This is because, feeling that he does not want to obey God, or knowing, as do the damned, that he no longer has access to or return to God, the invincible love of happiness constantly inspires in him an invincible hate against the One who alone can be the cause of unhappiness.

XIII. We should neither hate nor fear occasional causes of physical evil or unhappiness. We may separate ourselves from them. But we must never separate ourselves from them against the will of the real cause, by which I mean Order or the divine law.

XIV. Man *ought to want to do* only what God wants, since man is *able to do* only what God does. If he does not have the *power* to act, it is clear that he ought not *want* to act. Order, or the *Divine law* ought to be man's law, the rule of his desires and actions, since his desires are only efficacious by the *power* and actions of God alone. I cannot move my arm by my own strength; hence I ought not to move it according to my own desires. The law of God ought to govern all the effects of His power, not only in Himself, but also in all creatures. Order or the law of God is common to all minds; the power of God is common to all causes. Hence we cannot be released from submission to the law of God since we can act only by the efficacy of that power.

XV. Still, man is able to want to be happy; he is not able to want to be unhappy. But he ought to want or to do nothing to become happy, except what Order permits. We shall never find happiness if we seek it by using the power of God against His law. For that would be to abuse power by making use of it against the will of the One who communicates it. The voluptuary who wants to be happy in this world will perhaps be happy in part, in consequence of natural laws, but he will be eternally unhappy in the other [world], in consequence of the immutable order of justice, or the necessity of the divine law which wants all abuses of divine things to be punished by divine power. For nothing is more holy, more sacred, more diving than power; and anyone who attributes it to himself, anyone who makes it serve his pleasure, his pride, his particular desires, commits a crime which God alone can understand and the enormity of which He alone can punish.

XVI. It is an abominable injustice to derive vanity from one's nobility, dignity, quality, learning, riches or anything else. *Let he who would be glorified, be glorified in the Lord [I. Cor.* 13.1, after *Jeremiah* IX:22 f.], and relate all things to Him, since outside of God there is neither grandeur nor power. Man can esteem something, and prefer it to his horse. He can and ought to esteem other men, and, generally, all creatures, God truly having made them a part of His being. But to speak exactly, He has not made them part of His power and glory. God does all that man believes *he* does; He alone deserves the honor rendered to His creatures; He alone deserves all the movements of minds. Thus whoever would be loved, honored and feared by other men without seeing their relation to God, wants to be put in the place of the Omnipotent and share with Him the duties we owe to that power, the inner adoration which is only for the One who is scrutinizer of hearts.

XVII. So too, whoever fears, loves and honors creatures as *real powers* commits a kind of idolatry, and his crime becomes very criminal when his fear and love go to such excess as to dominate the fear and love of God in his heart. When he is less disposed to occupy himself with the Creator than with creatures, and this by a disposition acquired through choice or free acts, then he is an abomination before God.

XVIII. All the time we lose or do not use for God, Who alone is cause of the duration of our being, is time stolen or, rather, a sort of sacrilege. God acts only for His glory, not for our pleasures; and so at the very least, as much as He is in us, [by wasting time] we are rendering His actions useless for His plans.

XIX. Generally speaking, every gift God gives us which we make useless in relation to His glory, is stolen. God, by the necessity of His law, will demand an accounting of us.

XX. In a word, the power by which God creates us every moment, with all our faculties, gives Him an indispensable right to all that we are, and to all that belongs to us, which certainly belongs to us only so that, rendering it to God with all fidelity and all possible recognition, we might be able to deserve by our use of these gifts, to possess Him through Jesus Christ our Lord and Head, Who lifts us out of our profane state to sanctify us and render us worthy to honor the Father and the Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for infinite centuries.

NOTE

1. Cf. Pt. I, ch. 8, sec. 3. [M.]

Chapter Three

On the duties we owe to God's wisdom. It alone enlightens our minds, in consequence of certain natural laws, of which our desires are the occasional causes which determine their efficacy. Judgments and duties of minds in relation to universal Reason.

I. After having recognized the principle duties we owe to God's *power*, we must examine those owing to His *wisdom* which, though less known, are no less duties. Every creature depends essentially on its Creator. And every mind is essentially united to Reason. Just as no creature can act by its own strengths, so no mind can be enlightened by its own lights. Now, all our clear ideas come only from that universal Reason which contains them, just as all our strength comes only from the efficacy of the general cause, which alone has power. Anyone who believes he can be a light unto himself, and be his own reason, is no less mistaken than the one who believes himself really to possess power. And anyone who gives thanks to his benefactor for the fruits of the earth which are only to nourish the body, is somewhat ungrateful, or proud, or at least rather stupid if he refuses to recognize that he owes all true goods, the nourishment of the mind and knowledge of truth, to God.

II. Man's mind has two essential relationships: [1] It is united to universal Reason, whereby it has or can have commerce with all minds and with God Himself. [2] It is united to a body, whereby it has or can have some relation to all sensible creatures. It is the power of God which alone is the efficacious principle or bond of these two unions. But powerless and stupid man imagines that it is through his own willing that he is wise and powerful, that is, united to the intelligible world whose relations he contemplates, and to the visible world whose beauties he admires.

III. God alone, in consequence of the laws of body-soul union, makes all bodily movements in man, both those which bring him near to and those which take him away from sensible objects. But since the occasional causes of these movements are the different desires of his will, man attributes to himself that power which is only God working within him. Even the effort which accompanies his desires, – that weak effort, an effort which is a sure mark of powerlessness and dependence, often ineffectual, an effort God makes him feel in order to undercut pride and allow man to deserve his gifts – that effort, I say, so sensible and confused, persuades man that he has strength, that he is effectual. Since he does feel that he wants to move his arm, but neither sees nor feels anything of the Divine operations within himself, it turns out that the more God

is exact and faithful in executing his desires, the more is he faithless in recognizing such bounty.

IV. Similarly, it is God alone, in consequence of the natural laws of union of the mind with Reason, who discloses to man all those ideas which enlighten him and lead him, so to speak, into the land of truth where the soul dwells, to show man His order and His wonders. But since the occasional causes of the presence or withdrawal of ideas are nothing else than the different desires of our acts of will, we indiscreetly attribute to ourselves the power to do what is in fact God working within us. And even the effort which accompanies our attention, that weak effort, that sure mark of powerlessness and dependence, ineffectual often, an effort God makes us to feel to punish our pride and help us deserve our gifts – that effort, I say, so sensible and so confused, persuades us (just as does the one we make in order to move our bodily members) that we are the authors of that knowledge which accompanies our desires. For since there is nothing sensible about God's operation within us, and since we have an inner feeling of our own effort of attention, we consider that very attention as the genuine cause of the effects which accompany it or which follow from it with inviolable fidelity. This we do for the same reason that we attribute the power to move bodies to our own acts of will, and to those objects whose sensible qualities occasion feeling in us.

V. Anyone who approaches or moves away from sensible objects by the movement of his body, feeling himself to be struck by the bodies he hits, easily believes that he is the cause of his own body's locomotion, but at least he does not believe he has given being to the bodies around him. But one who, by the application of his mind leaves his body, as it were, and unites himself only to Reason, imagines himself to be drawing from his own depths those truths he contemplates. He believes he has given being to the ideas he discovers, and that he has, so to speak, formed out of his own substance that intelligible world in which he finds himself. Since the things he sees there do not touch him or stimulate his senses, he imagines that they have no true reality outside of him. For we all judge the reality of beings, as the solidity of bodies, by the impression they make on our senses.

VI. It is certain that man is not his own wisdom, his own light. There is a universal Reason which enlightens all minds, an intelligible substance common to all intelligent beings, a substance immutable, necessary and eternal. All minds contemplate it without interfering with each other's doing so; all possess without injuring each other, all are nourished by it without diminishing its abundance in the least. It is given to all, and completely to each. For all minds can, so to speak, embrace the same idea at the same time in different places, all equally possess it, all penetrate it or be penetrated by it.

VII. Two men cannot be nourished by the same fruit, and, if they are far apart, cannot hear the same voice, nor can they often look at the same objects. All creatures are particular beings, which cannot be the general and common good. Whoever possesses some particular good deprives others of it at the same time, and therefore irritates those others and makes them envious or makes

enemies of them. But reason is a common good, which unites those who possess it in a perfect and durable friendship. For it is a good which is not diminished by being possessed, not confined to any space, not worn out by use. Truth is indivisible, immense, eternal, immutable, incorruptible: *Wisdom never fadeth away, the light that cometh from her never goeth out*, says scripture *[Wisdom* VI:12, VII:10]

VIII. Now this common and immutable wisdom, this universal Reason, is the wisdom of God Himself, that by which and for which we are made *[Proverbs* VIII]. For God has created us by His power in order to unite us to His wisdom, and through it to do us the honor of being able to be bound to Him in an eternal society, to take communion with His thoughts and desires, and thence to become like unto Him as much as a creature can. *Wisdom remaining in herself, maketh all things new*, says the sage, *and in all ages entering into holy souls she maketh them friends of God and the Prophets. For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom* [*Wisdom* VII:27,28]. Wisdom, though immutable in itself, renews all things. It makes us friends of God, because God loves only those who dwell in wisdom. Now, we have society with God only through His Son, His Word, the universal Reason of all intelligent beings, incarnated in time and made visible so as to enlighten gross and carnal minds, and guide them by their senses, by a sensible authority, to awareness of truth – but always as Reason, always wisdom, light and truth. Whoever renounces universal Reason thereby renounces the author of faith, which is Reason itself, made sensible and proportioned to men's weaknesses, to men who hear only their senses. Doubtless nothing is more conformable to Reason than what faith teaches us; the more we think about it, the more we are convinced – provided that faith guides each step of the mind, and that imagination does not thwart it by dissipating the light which faith diffuses into us through its vain phantoms or human thoughts.

IX. Thus, in order to recognize our duties to God as wisdom or universal Reason of minds, it is not enough to be convinced of the many ways the mind is united to God. We must go further and examine carefully the laws of soul-body union, because we are so situated, between God and bodies, that the more we augment and fortify the union of the mind with bodies, the more the union of the mind with God is weakened and diminished. And contrariwise, the less the body acts on the mind, the more the mind freely consults the inner Truth. I shall not explicate the laws of mind-body union in detail here; they may be studied in another place.[2] What we least remember is that our feelings work to diffuse the soul throughout the body, so to speak, and to make the soul attentive to the body's needs, and that our imagination and passions lure it off into everything around us; that the body never speaks to the mind except for itself, and that it insolently lures us away from the inner teacher, Who speaks to us for the sake of the good or perfection of our being. In a word, our union with Reason is at present weak and delicate, such that the least feeling which strikes us can actually break it, no matter what effort we make to go back into ourselves and retain those ideas which are dissipated in this way.

X. *Judgments we must form in honor of Universal Reason*:

1. There are not many wisdoms, nor many *Reasons*.
2. Man is neither wisdom nor light to himself, nor is any intelligent being such to any other intelligent being.
3. God by *His power* is cause of our perceptions or clear understandings, in consequence of our desires or attention. But it is the intelligible and common substance of the truth, and it alone, which is their form, idea, and immediate object. A mind separated from *Reason* cannot know any truth. It can, of course, feel pain or pleasure because of the action of God upon it, as it can feel all the other particular modifications of which its' substance is capable. But it cannot know, by itself, those truths common to all minds. For man, who depends on the *power* of God in order to be happy and powerful, must still be united to His *wisdom* to become reasonable, wise, just, and perfect in every way.
4. Hence, we do not derive from objects the ideas we have of them.
5. The men we call our *teachers* are only our *mentors*.
6. When we go back into ourselves, to discover any truth whatsoever, it is not we who reply but the inner teacher who dwells within us, who presides unmediated over all minds, and makes the same replies to them all.

XI. All this reduces to one general proposition of Jesus Christ, *that we have only one Teacher, Jesus Christ Himself*, Who enlightens us by the evidence of His light when we go back into ourselves, and Who also gives us sure instruction when we consult the visible and infallible authority of the Church, which conserves the holy trust of His word, written and unwritten.

XII. From this great principle the following duties are derived:

1. Never to derive vanity from our understanding, but instead humbly to give thanks to the One Who is its principle and author.
2. To go back into ourselves as much as we can; to listen to Reason more willingly than to men.
3. To let ourselves yield only to evidence, and infallible authority.
4. When men speak, not to fail to compare what they put into our ears with what Reason replies to our minds; never to believe them except concerning facts, and then only with reservations.
5. Never to speak to them, at least with an air of confidence, unless Reason has first spoken to us by way of its' evidence.
6. To speak to them only as a mentor, never as a teacher; to ask questions often, and by various methods lead them subtly toward the Teacher, universal Reason, by requiring them to go back into themselves. This is the only way we can instruct others.
7. Never to dispute for the sake of disputing, and never to propose the truth to others when the crowd, or passion or some other reason makes it obvious that no one will go back into themselves to hear the decision of the just judge.
8. To consult Reason only on subjects worthy of it, and useful to us, whether

to bear us toward the good or unite us to the truth, to govern our hearts or to acquire some strength and freedom of the mind.

9. As much as possible, to keep dear in our memories only those principles having certain and fruitful consequences or necessary truths, or the precious replies of inner truth.
10. As a rule, to neglect facts, such as men's actions, which in the main have no certain rule or order; for they do not enlighten the mind, and often corrupt the heart.
11. Our inviolable law is Order; it is not custom, which often is opposed to Order and Reason. To follow an example of others without holding it up to Order, is to act like a beast, to act only mechanically. Though the law of pleasure is, by itself, of no worth at all, it is of more worth to follow that law than foolishly to obey unfortunate and wicked customs. Our life and conduct must render honor to Reason, and become worthy of the great qualities we bear.

XII. Scorn finery, beauty, even the strength of the imagination and all those studies which cultivate that in us which makes us so estimable and agreeable in the eyes of the world. An overly delicate or schooled imagination does not submit itself willingly to Reason. The body always speaks by way of the imagination, and when the body speaks, it is an unfortunate necessity that Reason will either be silent or be ignored.

XIII. To be fortified in this scorn, we must frequently and with particular application compare that which is brilliant for imagination to the inner light, in order to make the deceptive and charming dazzle with which imagination covers its crazy ideas to disappear. We almost never need to turn our concern to the outward manners by which people are rewarded in this world.

XIV. We must carefully close those paths by which the soul leaves the presence of God and is lured out toward creatures. A mind constantly distracted by the action of sensible objects cannot render to Reason the respect and diligence which is its due. To give full freedom to our senses is to treat reason with contempt.

XV. We must ardently love truth, wisdom, universal Reason; consider all the gold in Peru as a grain of sand in comparison with it. *All gold, in comparison with her, is as a little sand,* says the Sage [*Wisdom* VII:9]. Pray to it constantly, by means of attention[1]; take pleasure in consulting it, hearing its replies, obeying it, since it *takes its delights in conversing among us* [*Prov.* VIII:31].

NOTES

1. Cf. above, Pt. I, Ch. 5, sec. 4.
2. Apparently a reference to the 1688 *Dialogues on Metaphysics.*

Chapter Four

Duties owed to Divine love. Our will is only a continuous impression of the love God bears toward Himself, Who alone is the true good. Evil cannot be loved, but that which is neither good nor evil can be taken for an evil. Similarly we cannot hate the good, but the true good is, in effect, evil to the wicked, being the cause of their misery. In order that God may be seen by us as good, our love must be like His, always submissive to Divine law. Duties.

I. We depend on God's power, and we do nothing except through its' efficacy. We are united to His Wisdom, and we know nothing except by its' light. But even more so are we animated by His love, so that we are capable of loving any good only by way of the continuous impression of His love, which He bears toward Himself. It is this truth which must now be explicated, in order to take note of our general duties to God in this respect.

II. It is certain that God acts only for His own sake; He has no other motive than His own self-love. He can only want something through His will, and that will is not, as ours, an impression coming to Him from outside and urging Him beyond Himself. Rather, since He is His own good, His love can only be self-love; His end is Himself, and He can only be himself. Hence God does not give to created spirits a love which either may or may not incline toward His; love of the good, in minds, is produced only by the will of God, which will is nothing other than the love God bears toward Himself. Now love, in God, can only incline toward Himself, for God is sufficient unto Himself. But the love of creatures ought not to come to a halt at other creatures. It ought to incline solely toward God. For there are not two, or several true goods; there is only one, since there is only one true cause. Hence only God is lovable, where by love I mean, love *as-union*. Thus too, since God cannot want someone to love what is not lovable, nor not to love what is lovable, and presupposing that someone is capable of loving, it is a necessity that since our love comes from God, it should incline back toward God, and uniquely toward Him, and that it is related to Him in the primary institution of nature.

III. So since God creates minds and wants to render them happy, he unceasingly impresses upon them the love of the good. And since He acts only for Himself, and the good is and can only be in Himself, this natural love of the good, by itself, carries them only toward God. For this love is similar to the one God bears toward Himself. This love, too, is invincible, since it is a continuous

and powerful impression from Divine love; and it is none other than our will, since it is only by the various determinations of this love that we are able to love all the objects which have the appearance of good.

IV. From this it is clear that we are not able to love evil, and that we have no movement toward it. Nevertheless we are able, by error, to take the evil for good, and love evil, by choice, all the while loving good by a natural love. We can love evil or, rather what is neither good nor evil, by an abominable abuse of the good love God unceasingly impresses on us, to make Himself loved by us as being alone our true good, capable of rendering us happy. Above all we must be careful that all creatures, however perfect or good in themselves, are neither good nor evil by relationship to us, for they do not really have power to make us good or evil. As they are occasional causes of good or evil, of pleasure or pain, we can unite ourselves to them, or separate from them, by bodily movement. But we cannot reasonably love or fear them, because all movement not tending toward God, Who is the principle and end of movement, is disorderly, and should be punished if freely undertaken.

V. It is also clear that we cannot hate the good since, invincibly wanting to be happy, we cannot separate ourselves from the One Who makes us happy. Yet we can, in error, take a good for an evil, and then hate the good with that hate we have for evil. But that hatred is, at bottom, only a movement of love. We only flee evil by means of a movement of the love we have for the good. For God, having made us to be happy by loving Him, has not given us any movement for separating ourselves from Him, but only for uniting ourselves to Him. Sinners or the damned hate God with an invincible and irreconcilable hatred, but it is by means of the love God gave them in order to love Him. However, God no longer being their good, but their evil, or, that is, the cause of their torments, according to the words of scripture: *With the pure, thou wilt show thyself pure, and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward* (*Psalms* 17:27), they hate Him by means of the invincible movement which God, always immutable in His conduct, gives them for the purpose of happiness.

VI. To understand this better, it is sufficient to observe that it is present pleasure which makes us presently and formally happy, and pain, and unhappy. Now, the damned feel pain, the hardened sinner fears it. The damned know that God alone is true cause of the pain, and the sinner believes this too, or at least he apprehends it. Hence it is necessary then, by means of the very desire to be happy, which they have, that they would abuse the movement God gives them in order to become united to Him, and that they would separate from Him. For, the more we are united to Him, the more God acts in us. Therefore too, the farther we are separated from God, the more we experience unhappiness. On the other hand, the blessed, for a similar reason, cannot cease loving God. And those who are near to God, who hope to find their happiness in Him, those sinners who by faith in Jesus Christ have hope of return and of grace, are by their invincible desire to be happy able to be happy, to love and fear God. This is the condition to which we are reduced in this life.

VII. Now in order that natural love, which God unceasingly impresses

within us, may remain love, and not be changed into hate; in order that love of happiness might render us happy, bear us and unite us to God instead of separating us from Him; in a word, in order that God might remain good in our regard and not become evil, our love must always be conforming or similar to Divine love. We must love perfection, as well as felicity. We must remain united to God's wisdom, as well as to His power. For, by creating man, God has given him, in love of the good, and by the impression of love which He bears toward Himself, as if to say, two loves – that of felicity, and that of perfection. By love of felicity He united man to His power, which alone can make us happy; and by love of perfection, He has united man to His wisdom, which alone can make us perfect and which ought to guide us as our inviolable law. God is, so to speak, divinely animated by these two loves, they are inseparable in Him and cannot be separated in us without our being lost completely. For God's power is wise and just; His wisdom is omnipotent; and whoever tries to keep to love of felicity without that of perfection, to be united to power in order to become happy without being formed through wisdom to be perfect, corrupts that love of felicity which will only serve to make him eternally unhappy. Now, the love of God above all things insofar as He is powerful, unique cause of our felicity, is not precisely that which justifies us. It is the love of God insofar as it is truth, and justice, the love of immutable order, love of Divine Law, which does that. We cannot cry to God, if we do not will, do not love that which He wills and loves, Immutable Order which is the Law of all Divine willing, ought to be our law as well. By His power, God will not be men's good, but their evil, if by His wisdom he is not their law, or the principle of their inward reformation. For happiness is a reward. To possess it, it is not sufficient to desire it, it must be earned. And we cannot earn it if we do not govern the movements of our hearts by the inviolable law of all intelligent being, by that law by which man has been formed, and by which he must be reformed. In a word, love of the immutable order of justice must always be joined to love as union which is related to God's power, in order that our love being similar to Divine Love, it may guide us to all the felicity and all the perfection of which we are capable.

VIII. Now, we must observe that in our present state, it often happens that our happiness and perfection are in conflict, and it is necessary to take sides, or to sacrifice our perfection to our happiness, or our happiness to our perfection; or, love of order to our pleasure, or our pleasure to love of order. But when we sacrifice our happiness to our perfection, our pleasure to love of order, we are deserving. For we obey the Divine Law at our own expense, and thereby pronounce loudly that God is just and powerful – a judgment conforming to the one God bears toward Himself. Our actions are not meritorious unless they express the judgments God has of His attributes. We abandon to God that which depends only on Him, our felicity, and by this submission we render honor to His power. But it depends in part on us to obey the Divine Law, and it does not depend on us at all that we enjoy happiness. Thus we ought to put back into God's hands our felicity, and apply ourselves solely to our perfection, honoring God by believing His word, by trusting in His justice and goodness, and living

content through faith in the strength of our hope, according to these words: *The righteous man will live by faith* (*Heb.* 10:38). God is surely just and faithful; He will give us all the happiness we deserve; our patience will not be fruitless. But no matter how great may be our desire and our application to the search for happiness, it will not be a cause for God to make us enjoy it without having earned it. In fact, excessive desire for happiness can perhaps make us unworthy, according to these admirable words of Jesus Christ: *If anyone would follow me, let him renounce himself, take up his cross and come with me, for whoever would be saved shall lose himself; and whoever loses himself for love of me, shall be saved* (*Matt.* 16:24)

IX. But that contrariety which is now found between our happiness and our perfection comes from the union of the mind with the body, which union is changed to a dependence as punishment for sin. For it is thus that the involuntary stimulations of the fibers of the brain's principal part are now the occasional causes of our agreeable or painful feelings, and consequently of our present happiness our unhappiness. The body to which we are united does not have the same interests as does Reason. It has its particular needs; it asserts them loudly, and mistreats the soul which refuses them. On the other hand, reason only makes threats and reproaches, which are neither as vivid nor as pressing as present pleasure or pain. Thus, we must become generously resolved to being unhappy in this life in order to conserve our perfection and justice; and to sacrifice our bodies, or rather our present happiness, in order to remain inseparably united to Reason, and submissive to Divine Law, content with the foretaste of true goods and firm in the hope that that same Divine Law, that same Reason incarnated and sacrificed and glorified in our nature, or our nature in it, will know how to render to us all that we have lost by obeying it.

X. This principle – that our will or, that is, the natural and necessary movement of our love, is only an unceasing impression of the love of God, which united us to His power in order to lead us to His wisdom or conform us to His law – is fruitful with consequences. Here are some of the most general ones:

1. Every movement of love which does not incline toward God is useless and vain, for creatures are powerless. But, moreover, such movements lead to evil or make a cause of evil out of the cause of good. Thus, all pleasure which comes to the soul only by way of the body is deceptive pleasure, since it determines the natural movement of our love for God toward bodies, toward ineffectual substances. The voluptuary is deceived. Nature, which he unjustly makes to serve his desires, is not a blind nature which can be abused with impunity.
2. Every movement of love which does not conform to immutable order, the latter being the inviolable law of creatures as well as of the Creator, is misgoverned. And, God being just, such a movement obliges Him sooner or later to turn it into our evil or cause of our unhappiness.
3. We cannot be united to God as our good if we do not conform ourselves to God as our Law. And the converse is true: we cannot conform

ourselves to Divine law, and by such conformity become perfect, without uniting ourselves to His power, and for that reason becoming happy – for God is essentially just.

XI. This truth can also be expressed in the following way, according to the analogy of faith: We have no access to God, no society with God, no share in the happiness of God except by way of universal Reason, eternal wisdom, the divine Word which was made flesh because man became carnal and His flesh became a victim because man became a sinner; and, by the sacrifice of the victim Who became mediator, purely intelligible Reason no longer being the bond of society between God and man because corrupt man could no longer either consult it or follow it. But above all it must be noted that Reason, while being incarnated, changed nothing of its nature, nor lost any of its power. It is immutable and necessary. It alone is the inviolable law of minds it alone has the right to command them. Faith is not contrary to an understanding of the truth; it leads to truth, unites the mind to Reason and through Reason re-establishes our society with God forever. We must conform ourselves to the Word made flesh, because the Word as-intelligible, the Word without flesh, is now too abstract a form for us, too sublime and too pure to form or reform gross minds and corrupt hearts, minds which cannot take hold of that which has no body and which reject everything which does not touch them. But understanding will succeed to faith; and the Word, no matter how united to our flesh it has been, will one day enlighten us with a purely intelligible light.

The Word was made victim because the Word without a victim had nothing it could offer – it could not be Pontifex, it could not give sinners some society with God without there being some reconciliation and sacrifice. (*Heb.* VIII:3) So we must conform ourselves to it in this present state, because while it is we who are the criminals, we take a share in the victim who is to be purified, consecrated, and sacrificed, before we are clarified and consummated in God for all eternity. But the life of Jesus Christ is our model only because it is conformed to order – it is our indispensable model and our inviolable law. We must follow Jesus Christ to the cross, because Order wants this body of sin to be annihilated in honor of Reason, to the glory of the One from whom it separates us. Order wants us to earn, through voluntary difficulties of which the body is the occasion, that happiness of which God alone is the true cause and of which we have been justly deprived because of the unjust pleasures we have unworthily demanded from a just God. These are oft-repeated truths, but they are very necessary truths.

XII. *Movements or duties:*

1. Let us love only God with a love as-union; and when we feel such a love for a creature excited within us, however much joy there may be in that creature, we must stifle these feelings, recognizing that only God has power, and that He animates us with His love only in order to unite us to Himself.
2. Let us flee pleasures, for they seduce us and corrupt us. Pleasure is the mark of the good; and God alone can make us feel it. But because His

working in us has nothing visible about it, we look at objects which are only the occasions of our feelings as if they were the causes, and we love them as our goods. In reality, we are only loving ourselves, our own happiness, when we enjoy them. Every pleasure which bears us to the love of bodies, substances inferior to our being, is in effect making us disorderly. And since the soul is not the cause of its own happiness, it is blind, ungrateful and unjust if it loves its own pleasures without rendering to the true cause which produces happiness in it, that love and respect due to that cause. Moreover, can we love God while amidst pleasure? Can we accomplish a present augmentation of our charity when we irritate and fortify our concupiscence in a thousand ways? Everything which comes to the soul by way of the body is only for the body; pleasure seduces it, corrupts it, kills it.

3. The love of grandeur, of fame, independence, is abominable; yet anyone who wants to be esteemed and loved is horrified at our saying this. But what, then? Should minds made to contemplate universal Reason, to love the power of the true good, be occupied with us and love us? Powerless as we are, should we want admirers, imitators, followers? It is certain that whoever does not see the injustice of pride has no commerce with Reason; and whoever knows this to be an injustice yet does not fear to commit it, completely renounces Reason.
4. Let us love Order, which is God's Law, the law He inviolably follows and invincibly loves. Do we think we can with impunity dispense with following it? If we abandon it, the pitiless justice of the living God will pursue us. But if our love conforms to that law, we shall be happy and perfect, both; we shall have society with God and a share in His happiness and glory.
5. We can only be reasonable by means of universal Reason; we can only be wise by means of eternal wisdom; we can only be just and holy by means of conformity to immutable Order. Therefore let us unceasingly contemplate Reason, let us ardently love wisdom, let us inviolably follow the divine law. Let us reform ourselves according to our model – He was made like unto us in order that we might make ourselves like unto Him. He is now at our door; He is proportioned to our weakness. He is, so to speak, already before us; let us open our eyes and see Him. He is within us; let us go back into ourselves to consult Him. He constantly calls upon us; let us hearken to His voice, let us not harden our hearts. But He is also established in the Holy of Holies as Pontifex according to the Order of Melchizedek [*Heb.* V], ever living, to intercede for us and give us the help of which we are in extreme need. Let us confidently approach Jesus Christ the True Propitiator, the Savior of sinners, Head of the Church, Architect of the eternal Temple, in a word, the occasional cause of Grace, without which we are too corrupt and too miserable to work at our own reformation, esteem and savor true good, or even sincerely to desire to be delivered from our evils.

Chapter Five

The three Divine Persons each impress their own mark on our minds, and our duties honor all three equally. Duties consist of nothing but inner movements, which must nevertheless appear outside us because of the society we have with other men.

I. Each of the three persons of the Holy Trinity impresses its own mark upon all minds created in Its image. The Father, to whom power is attributed, makes them to share in his power, having established them as occasional causes of all they produce. The Son communicates his wisdom and discloses all truths to them through their direct union with intelligible substance, which is comprised of the Son as universal Reason. The Holy Spirit animates them and sanctifies them through their invincible impression toward the good, and through the charity or love of Order which It infuses into all hearts. Since the Father begets his Word, man's mind knows that He exists. But moreover, through his desires man is the occasional cause of his knowledge. And just as the Son is, with the Father, the principle of divine and substantial love, so too our knowledge, excited by way of our desires which alone are truly within our power, has the role within us of being the principle of all governed movements of our love.

II. It is true that the Father engenders His Word from His own substance. But this is because God alone is essentially and substantially wisdom and light to Himself. It is still true that the Father and the Son have mutual love for each other, but that is because God alone is uniquely both His own good and His own law. But, since we cannot be Reason unto ourselves, the light not being capable of being a natural emanation from our substance; and since we are neither our own good nor our law unto ourselves, [therefore] every movement we have must come to us from elsewhere, and bear us elsewhere, so that we might be united to our good and conformed to our model.

III. God made all things according to His wisdom, in the movement of His Spirit and His love. So too we never act without some knowledge and through love. The three Divine Persons, equally, made all things; therefore. What we do without knowledge and without a whole and complete act of will is not, properly speaking, our work. The Father has, so to speak, a right of expectation over His Son; so similarly are we required to think about what it is we want. The Son sends the Holy Spirit, which precedes Him and the Father, though in a unity of principle; our love also presupposes the light, proceeds from it and is produced from it. Finally, love which proceeds from a clear understanding, is loved by itself and by the object of its knowledge and by the understanding

itself; so too substantial love infinitely loves the divine substance in the Father who begets it, in the begotten Word, and in the Holy Spirit, itself proceeding from the Father and the Son.

IV. All the relations of man's spirit with the Holy Trinity are but shadows and imperfect traits which cannot [fully] imitate the principle of all being, which (by means of an incomprehensible property of infinite being) communicates itself without being divided, and forms a society of three different persons in the unity of one substance. But however imperfect may be the image of the divine Trinity which we carry within ourselves, in its relation to our principle nothing is greater for a creature than this weak resemblance. We work for our perfection only insofar as we re-establish that resemblance; and we shall only be assured of our happiness insofar as we are reformed on this, our model. All of our true judgments and all our governed movements, all the duties we render to wisdom, power, and divine love are such traits as to reform us upon our model. And the habitual disposition of forming such judgments and making such movements is the true perfection of the creature, essentially dependent on the sovereign good, and uniquely made to find its perfection and its happiness in its resemblance with God. But we must admit it, and take careful note of it. The comparison I have just made between the soul and the Holy Trinity has only been a stammering attempt. This mystery is incomprehensible, and moreover, I have no clear idea of the human soul. How then could I give a precise account of its relationships? God created us in His image and His likeness. That fact is certain; but the 'how' is an enigma reserved for heaven. Nevertheless it is good to get a glimpse of the great truth, so that the mind may think on the excellence of its being, and that it may wish clearly to understand what it now perceives only confusedly.

V. Since the three persons of the Holy Trinity are one and the same God, only one substance, therefore all the duties which seem to be related particularly to one person, honor the other two equally. Every governed movement renders honor to the power of the Father as its' good, to the wisdom of the Son as its' law, and to the mutual love of Father and Son as its' principle. On the other hand, every sin or love of creatures dishonors true power, offends universal Reason and resists the Holy Spirit. For this reason, we cannot completely separate duties owed to power from those owing to wisdom and to substantial and Divine love, so that in the three preceding chapters I had to say the same things in different ways.

VI. Even though all the duties which spirits owe to God, pure Spirit, Who wants to be adored in spirit and in truth, consists only in true judgements and in movements of love conforming to those judgments – still, men being composed of mind and body, living in society with one another, raised in a common form of religious worship and being tied thereby to certain ceremonies, they find themselves obligated to perform an infinity of particular duties which are necessarily related to those [general] duties I have just noticed. All these particular duties just mentioned are arbitrary, at least in their principle; but spiritual duties are by themselves absolutely necessary. We may be released

from external duties, but we can never be released from these spiritual ones. They depend upon an inviolable law, upon necessary and immutable Order. External duties, by themselves, do not sanctify those who render them to God; such duties gain their merit and reward only by way of the spiritual duties which accompany them. But every movement of the soul which is governed by true judgments, directly and by itself honors the Divine perfections.

VII. For example, it is a duty arbitrary in its principle that we should enter a church with our heads uncovered. But, to enter into the presence of God without respect and without any religious movement is not [to violate] some arbitrary duty, but is [to violate] an essential duty. Anyone who cannot uncover himself, for some particular reason, can still take part in the Sacrament while covered; women are dispensed from this duty; and, provided that it was known that it was not contempt but a need which required someone to remain covered, a dispensation is not ordinarily needed. Only those who are in spirit falsifying, who are rebellious or weak, should be found at fault. But no one can take part in the Sacrament and be dispensed from offering to God the sacrifice of their spirit and their heart, with prayers and movements which honor God. Whoever prostrates himself before an alter, far from being deserving, far from honoring God by this external duty, commits an enormous crime if, by that action, he is only kneeling to attract the esteem of the world. But, on the other hand, whoever is unable to move and cannot go outdoors, but who is still agitated within by movements conforming to those which Faith and Reason teach us are the Divine attributes, such a person honors God, draws near to Him and is united to Him, is conforming to His immutable law by governed movements which leave a habit or disposition of charity behind them. He is purified, and truly sanctified. But to most people, religion is not spiritual; often, they only get as far as the surface, which strikes them and determines them to imitate that which they have no real plan to do.

VIII. It is certain that we lack the respect due to universal Reason if we separate ourselves from it by the use we make of wine, or if we go out of ourselves, where Reason dwells and makes its replies, to let ourselves by transported by passions in a world where imagination is mistress. In a word, to withdraw ourselves voluntarily and without any necessity, from the presence of our good and from Reason, is a movement which dishonors Divine Majesty. It is a failing of religion and is committing a type of impiety. But men do not judge things this way. They judge the depth by the surface, by outward manners. They would imagine it a great crime to do certain acts, even if not in themselves indecent acts, in a holy place; and yet they do not think that nothing is more indecent than to fail to fulfill the essential duties of reasonable creatures no matter what place they might occupy. A person who is religious even to the point of superstition passes for a saint, in their minds; and the Christian philosopher is taken for impious if he does not forsake Reason and enter into their feelings and religiously observe their customs.

IX. It is true that a philosopher conducts himself poorly if he neglects external duties and scandalizes plain people. *It would be better for him if a*

stone were attached to his neck, and he were thrown into the depths of the sea [Matt. 18:6]. Every man ought to give witness to his faith by his manners, and lead other men, [who are] always sensitive to manners, to movements which honor God. In all things relating to God, we must humbly take up the attitude or posture of men who adore Him. This is less foolish, less ridiculous than any other attitude we might have. But when manners are superstitious and carry minds to judgments and movements which dishonor the Divine attributes, then it is an impiety to take them up. These manners are perhaps pardonable in those who only have a confused idea of God. But one who is better instructed in religion, who has a more particular knowledge of the Divine perfections, ought not to do anything, out of deference to others, which belies his inner light.

X. The mind is only capable of thinking and of willing. Hence spiritual worship consists only in judgments and movements of the soul. Anyone who loves and thinks as God loves and thinks, who judges the divine attributes as God judges them, and who governs his movements as God does, according to the divine law, the immutable Order – such a one, I say, honors God and is loved by God because he resembles Him. It is certain that if Faith in Jesus Christ justifies us, this is because it puts our minds in a condition to adore God. Anyone who protests that he can have no access to God and no society with Him except by way of Jesus Christ, judges of God and of his creatures as God judges them. He announces through his faith that God is God, that He is infinite, and that in comparison to God the creature is nothing – a judgment which agrees with the one God holds concerning Himself and His creatures. Every religion except Christianity is impious because every other one announces a false judgment about Divinity. The Deist, the Mohammedan, the Socinian says to God that He is not God when they pretend to have access to God without the Man-God. For the essential attribute of the Divinity being infinity, and the distance between the finite and the infinite being itself an infinity, the relation between the two is null.

XI. The majority of Christians have the Jewish approach – their religion is not spiritual, and consequently it is not reasonable. *Eternal life is to know the true God and Jesus Christ His only Son* [*John* 17:3]. It is to have feelings worthy of the Divine attributes, and movements conforming to these feelings. It is to know Jesus Christ who alone gives us access to the Father, and pours charity into our hearts. It is to be fully convinced that He alone is the Sovereign Priest of true goods, the *occasional* cause of Grace, so that we may draw near to Him in confidence, and with His help excite in ourselves movements conforming to knowledge of the true worship, which He has given us, and which honors the Divine Majesty. But everyone makes a theology and a religion for himself, or at least a particular devotion of which self-love is the motive, prejudice the principle and sensible goods the aim. Divine worship often consists only in superficial sacrifices, vocal prayers, ceremonies established to elevate spirits to God, [but] which often serve only to console a tired imagination by their magnificence – imaginations tired by the disgust they find in rendering duties to God. Custom, human considerations, hypocrisy, – these transport the body into

the Church. But their spirits and hearts do not go in. And if the priest offers up Jesus Christ to God, in their presence, or if Jesus Christ Himself offers Himself to His Father for their sin, before our altars, they, for their part, make sacrifices to ambition, to avarice, to voluptuousness, spiritual sacrifices made in all those places where their imagination has transported them.

Chapter Six

Duties in society, generally. Two sorts of society. Everything must be related to the eternal society. Different kinds of love and respect. General principles of our duties toward men. These duties must be exterior and relative. The danger of rendering inward duties to men. Commerce with the world very dangerous.

I. After having generally explicated the duties we owe to God, we must examine those we owe to men, since God has made us for the purpose of living in society with each other, under one law, universal Reason, and has made us all dependent on one power, that of the King of Kings and sovereign Lord of all things.

II. We are capable of having two sorts of society with each other: that of several years, and that of eternity – a society of commerce, and society of religion, that is, a society animated by passions, subsisting on a communion of particular and perishable goods, whose end would be comfort and conversation of the body's life, and society governed by Reason, sustained by faith, subsisting in the communion of true good, the end of which would be a life blessed for eternity.

III. The great design, or, rather, the only design of God, is the Holy City, the heavenly Jerusalem where truth and justice live. Other societies will perish, though God be immutable in his designs; and this fact is a sure mark that they are not His true and principal design. But the spiritual society of men will endure eternally; the realm of Jesus Christ will have no end; His Temple will be eternal, His priesthood will not be changed by any other. God has confirmed this by a solemn oath: "*The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent. Thou art a Priest forever, after the Order of Melchizedek*" [*Psalms* 110:4]. The house of God is being built upon unshakable foundations, upon the beloved Son in Whom God has put His kindness and by Whom all things subsist to the glory of the One Who gave them being.

IV. When we make some sort of establishment here below, or obtain some such for our friends, we are building on sand, we accommodate our friends in a building about to collapse. It will all dissolve under our feet, at least at death. But we are working for eternity when we enter the edifice of the Temple of the true Solomon, and when we cause others to enter there. This work will subsist through all the centuries. Hence it is there that we are to procure the good for ourselves and for others; there is the principal aim of all our duties, there is the

holy society which we are to begin here below by means of the charity we are obliged to have for each other. Since God's design in perishable societies is only to furnish Jesus Christ, architect of the eternal Temple, with the materials appropriate for forming His Church, it is not possible that we might fail at our essential duties and still enter into the plans of the One Who wants to save all men; we are to make use of all our powers to hasten His great work and procure for men the goods for which God has made them.

V. Indeed, when Jesus Christ commands us to love one another, we do not imagine that He commands anything other than mutually procuring true goods for each other. What are the goods He showered upon His Apostles and Disciples? Did He give to them as false friends give, that is, giving because others enter into their passions, giving perishable goods? Has He delivered them into the hands of persecutors? Without a doubt, no. Our principal duties of charity are not found in that sort of giving. We must help our neighbors, and conserve their lives, just as we are obliged to conserve our own lives; but we must prefer the neighbor's salvation over his life, as over our own life.

VI. *To love* – this verb is equivocal. It signifies three different things, which we must carefully distinguish. It means to unite ourselves by an act of will to an object as our good, or cause of our happiness; second, to conform ourselves to someone as the model or rule for our perfection; and third, to feel benevolence toward someone, to wish him happiness and perfection. Love *as union* is due only to the power of God; love as conformity is due only to the divine law; immutable order. No creature is capable of acting in us; no person can be our living law or perfect model. Jesus Christ himself, however impeccable, and though he is Reason incarnate, has done some things which we are not to do (because, circumstances not being the same, intelligible Reason, our inviolable law, the indispensable model of all intelligences, prevents us).

VII. Thus we are not to love our neighbor with a love *as union*, nor with a love *as conformity*. But we are able and we ought to love him with a love as benevolence. We are to love him in the sense that we are to desire his perfection and his happiness; and since our practical desires are occasional causes of certain effects which are useful to that end, we ought to put forth all our efforts to procure for our neighbors a solid virtue, so that they will earn the true goods which are its reward. Truly it is to this that the commandment given us by Jesus Christ in the Gospels would oblige us, when He says we are to love on another as ourselves, and as he loved us.

VIII. *To honor* – this verb, also, is equivocal. It denotes a submission of the mind to genuine power, [also] a respect or exterior submission to an occasional cause, and [finally] a simple esteem for something because of the excellence of its being or the perfection it possesses or is capable of possessing.

IX. We owe the first sort of honor only to God, since it consists of submission of the mind to true power. God alone is to be honored directly and absolutely in the powers He has established. Even though we may render honors and external submission most exactingly, toward our legitimate superiors, where law or custom so authorize, and even though we may add

inward respect to these submissions because of the power those authorities represent, still all submission of the soul must be related uniquely to God. It is a baseness of spirit to fear even the most excellent of creatures; only God is to be feared in spirit. Yet we ought to esteem every being in proportion to the excellence of its being, or the perfection it possesses or is capable of possessing. Therefore love as benevolence, relative and external respect and submission, and simple esteem are the [three] general principles to which, as I see it, all duties to others should be related.

X. There is this difference between the duties which Religion obliges us to render to God, and those which society requires we render to other men, that the principal duties of Religion are internal and spiritual, because God penetrates hearts and, speaking absolutely, has no need of His creatures; whereas the duties of society are almost all external. For though we cannot know each other's feelings unless we give each other sensible clues, still all of us alike need each other, either for the conservation of life, for some particular instruction, or for thousands of other sorts of help we cannot do without.

XI. Therefore it is a demonic pride to require from other men those internal and spiritual duties owing only to God, pure spirit, the scrutinizer of hearts Who alone is independent and sufficient unto Himself. To make such a requirement is to want to dominate the spirit of another – it is to attribute to oneself the quality of scrutinizer of hearts: in a word, it is to require what ought not to be required. Moreover, it is to require something entirely useless – for what can our inward adoration do for other men, or theirs for us? If they faithfully execute our orders, then of what can we complain? Even if they see God in our person, if they love Him and fear Him in us, it is still certain that we are attributing His power and independence to ourselves if we are not satisfied at this point. *Servant*, says St. Paul [*Coloss.* 3:22], *obey your masters in all things, according to the flesh, not with eye-service, as man-pleasing, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.* It is God Who is to be feared, even in the obedience we render to men. *Fearing God*, he continues [*Coloss.* 3:23], *whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.* Service is to be rendered with affection, as to the God Who knows hearts, and not as to men; to God Who has the power to reward us, and to men, all of whose wishes are, by themselves, ineffectual. *Knowing*, he continues, *that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: For ye serve the Lord Christ* [3:24]. Serve the Lord Jesus Christ and do not make yourselves the slaves of men. You have been redeemed at a great price. *Ye are bought with a great price; be not ye the servants of men* [*I Cor.* 7:23].

XII. Since there is a direct union between the soul and the body, and a mutual relationship between the movements of each of the two substances, it is very difficult to approach an object by moving the body, the object being the *occasional* cause of pleasure, without uniting ourselves to it by the motion of our love as if it were the true cause of that pleasure. Similarly, it is difficult for the imagination, dazzled by the stimulation surrounding the great, to lower itself and prostrate itself before them without the soul following suit, or at least

lowering itself. As a matter of fact, the soul should prostrate itself – but before the power of the invisible God, which it ought to honor in a prince in whom power resides in a visible way.

XIII. Since the soul feels itself to be happy in some way by means of the pleasure it enjoys when the body is nourished by a delicious fruit, it ought to love something, in such a case. But it ought to love only God, Who acts within it, Who alone can act in it. But our senses, rebellious through sin, disturb our minds. They insolently draw us away from the presence of God and preoccupy us only with that ineffectual matter which we hold in our hands and chew between our teeth. They force us to believe that this fruit contains and pours out to us the agreeable flavor we enjoy. Now, since God's power does not appear to our eyes, we see nothing except this fruit, to which we would attribute the cause of our current happiness. Our senses are given to us only for the sake of the conservation of our sensible being. So what difference does it make to them where it comes from, once they have it, or from whence proceeds a pleasure, providing they taste it?

XIV. In the same way, our imagination quickly dissipates all abstract ideas of an invisible power when we are in the presence of our Sovereign. The divine law, immutable Order, Reason are only phantoms which fade and disappear when the prince commands or when he speaks with authority. The majesty of the prince, the sensible stimulation of his grandeur, the respectful and fearful attitude which everyone does and should display, all this stimulates the brains of the ambitious, even of most men, is such a way that, in these men in whom the passions are excited, only a few minds are strong enough to consult the divine law, to think on the power of the invisible God, and to return into themselves to hear the judgments pronounced within us by the One Who presides immediately over all minds.

XV. It is because of this direct union of mind and body, which by sin has been changed into a dependence, that nothing is more dangerous than commerce with the world of the great; thus it is necessary that we have some particular vocation, with a strong and extraordinary reason, in order to get ourselves involved in it. Ordinarily, in that world, people only form societies when ambition and voluptuousness are the principle and aim. Such societies not being conducted by Reason nor by Faith, but by passions always inconstant and unjust, they are therefore easily broken, and cast men into the worst misfortunes. Finally, those who do not have enough magnitude, enough courage, or strength of mind to render those duties owing to God when in the presence of the prince, those who are upset by the press of events when in full view of many people, in a word, those who are left dazzled, dizzied and upset by the commerce of the world of the great, – whatever it might be, – ought to avoid it and put themselves in such a situation that they would be able, with freedom, to honor and love the true power, conform themselves to the divine law, and render their inward and spiritual duties of God. These duties are indispensable, and it is certain we owe nothing to our neighbors if what we owe them prevents us from rendering to God what which indispensably we owe to Him.

XVI. There is almost never anything to gain among men. Their language is corrupt, as is their heart; it only gives birth to false ideas in the mind. It inspires only the love of sensible objects. But their example is even more dangerous. For though it is less conformable to Reason than is their discourse, it is a lively and animated language all its own, which invincibly persuades those who are not on their guard. We often listen to what is said, without thinking to do it. But we are so given to imitation that we mechanically do what others are doing. Nothing obliges us to do what we hear said but is not done. But, by contrast, it is an injury to society, it is making ourselves odious or ridiculous, it is making ourselves out as bizarre or capricious spirits, it is making some sort of schism if we condemn by our particular conduct that which the world around us is following.

XVII. Nevertheless, charity and our natural constitution frequently oblige us to live in society. Not everyone can stand a life of solitude, least of all those to whom commerce with the world is the most dangerous. They must see and be seen, talk and hear others talking. Commerce without passions is refreshing to the mind, and gives it strength. Hence we need to live with others. But we need to choose those who are reasonable, or at least capable of hearing Reason and submitting themselves to Faith, in order to work together for their sanctification and our own. For we must build for eternity, we must begin here below an eternal society, hastening while there is time, to enter into the repose of the Lord and to let others enter there, so that our society may be with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, by means of an immortal charity which will constantly proceed from the power and wisdom of God, Whose continual influence will be the cause of our perfection and eternal happiness.

Chapter Seven

> Duties of esteem are owed to everyone – to the least of men, to the greatest sinners, to our enemies and persecutors, to the accomplished and the unaccomplished. It is difficult to govern with precision either these duties or those of benevolence, because of the differences in personal and relative merit, and their various combinations. A general rule, the surest that can be given on this issue.

I. The three general principles to which we must relate all particular duties we owe to others are, as I have said in the preceding chapter, [1] simple *esteem*, which is to be proportioned to the excellence and *perfection* of each being; [2] *respect*, a relative submission of the mind, which is to be proportioned to the subalternate *power* of intelligent occasional causes; and [3] love-as-*benevolence* which is owed to all those capable of enjoying the goods which we can share with them.

II. Simple esteem is a duty we ought to render to all men. Contempt is a hurt, in fact the greatest of hurts. Only nothingness is to be held in contempt; every real being deserves esteem. Man being the most noble of creatures, it is a false judgment and a misgoverned movement to hold him in contempt, whatever he may be. The least of men can be raised up to sovereign power; and the first Kings God gave to the Israelites were, so to speak, drawn from the dregs of the people. Saul, of the lowest family, from the tiniest of the twelve tribes, found royalty when he went looking for his father's asses. "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of Benjamin?," as he said to Samuel, who promised him the kingdom [*I Kings* 9:21]. And David, Isaiah's youngest child, was taken, as he said, from behind the flocks to be put at the head of God's chosen people. "From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance" [*Psalms* 78:71].

III. But the Gospels give us even more examples. They teach us that the poor are the members of, the brothers of Jesus Christ, *that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them* [*Matt.* 5:3], and that they have the power to receive their friends in the eternal Tabernacles [*Luke* 16:9]. For though when baptized the rich are washed in the blood of the Lamb as are the poor, they soil themselves in many ways by the voluptuousness around them, and by the ambition which makes them forget their quality as children of God, so that Jesus Christ was always angered at them and cursed them constantly in the Gospels. *Woe to the*

rich, for they have their consolation in this world [*Luke* 6:24], which will be overthrown; *Let the poor man be glorified, because of his greatness*, says the Apostle St. James [*Jms.* I:10], *and let the rich man be humiliated, because of his baseness; he will pass away like a flower.* "O ye rich", he says later on [5:1,2, etc.], "weep, cry out and howl for the miseries which will fall upon you. Your riches are corrupted by rottenness, rust has consumed your gold and silver, and that rust will bear witness against you, and devour your flesh as would a fire. That is the treasure of anger you have laid up for your last days".

IV. We must not esteem and give signs of esteem only to the poor and the least of men, however, but also to the sinners and those who commit the greatest crimes. Their lives are abominable; their conduct deserves scorn and need never be approved no matter how much flash of grandeur it may arouse. But their person always deserves esteem. For nothing deserves scorn except nothingness and sin, the latter a real nothingness which corrupts nature and wipes out merit but which does not at all destroy the excellence of the person. The greatest of sinners is still able to become, with the help of heaven, pure and holy as the angels. He is able eternally to enjoy true goods with us, and to precede us into the Kingdom of God. We must have compassion for his misery; not the misery which distresses him, but the one which corrupts him; not for his pains; but for his disorders, which put him out of a state wherein he could possess with us those goods he is able to enjoy without depriving us of them.

V. But moreover, what right have we to judge the secret inner intentions of others? Only God penetrates hearts. A person who commits a crime perhaps does it without wanting to do it. His weak mind is troubled, his inflamed passions have perhaps deprived him of the use of his freedom for the moment. But if he acted freely, and has a contrite and humble heart, he perhaps obtained pardon or will obtain it tomorrow, a happy day for him and fatal for you because of your irreparable fall brought on by your pride.

VI. Therefore, scorn for another's person is not only unjust, but also places him who gives out the marks of scorn outside of any possible bond of charity with the scorned person, so that he is cut off from a power of which he will never be able to make use. For men do not form societies with those who scorn them. We enter naturally into society with others, do good for them only in the hope of some sort of return. We do not get into any sort of interchange when we expect to lose everything and never gain anything, and we do not expect any help from people who are so unjust as to scorn us. Scorn and contempt are not only sure marks that we really lack charity and benevolence, but also that we are so far removed from them that we shall never have them.

VII. Concerning our enemies and persecutors, it is certain that esteem is a duty more general than benevolence. We may not wish certain goods for our enemies, because the love we owe to ourselves obliges us, or at least permits us to not desire that they have power to harm us. Hence, we may in some fashion lack benevolence for our persecutors without being remiss in our duties concerning them. For it is only true goods that we should always wish upon our enemies. But the persecutions people carry out against us do not in themselves

diminish the esteem we owe them. Persecution, on the contrary, ought to augment esteem, in this sense: We ought to give them more sensible and more frequent marks of esteem. We can walk right past a friend, or our own father, without greeting him, and we have not insulted him. But we insult an enemy when not rendering to him this duty, because he does not have the same feelings for his enemies as for other men. He takes it as a reason to believe we scorn him, whereas our friends know it was pure inadvertence.

VIII. Moreover, nothing is more divisive among men than scorn. For no one wants to be counted as nothing, in his society with others. No one wants to be the lowliest part of that body of which he is a member. Thus minds already upset, men already separated from that body by some ill-feeling, may never rejoin it once scorn is present. But, for a countervailing reason, mortal ill-feeling can be dissipated if people mutually render the duty of esteem and by so doing make it plain that, far from pretending to a superior rank in the society they want to have with others, they voluntarily defer to others, doing justice to themselves and to others according to the judgments they have of themselves and of others. Not even self-love and secret pride permit us to continue to regard an enemy as a person who voluntarily gives us indications that he is persuaded of our own particular excellence.

IX. If we fail at our duties of esteem concerning our enemies or persons who have no fame, we frequently exceed our duties of esteem concerning our friends or persons elevated in station because of birth, riches or some other dazzling quality. The brain is built in such a way, for the good of each particular person and for that of society, at least in terms of this present life, that the body mechanically assumes an air of esteem and respect for all those who are our friends or are in a condition to be of some good use to us. Now the esteem we pay to persons spreads out over all that confronts them. *When a rich man speaketh*, says Scripture, *every man holdeth his tongue, and look what he sayeth; they extol it to the clouds; but if the poor man speak, they say, 'What fellow is this?'* [*Eccli.* 13:22]. Our machine is tuned in this key. Two lutes, in agreement, can sound one sound. When they are in the same room, we cannot touch the first without setting the second to vibrating. Our friends, also, are in tune with us: Whoever affects us, sets them to moving in some fashion. Those whose good graces we are always interested in possessing, are always right; they stimulate us, and we, them. They deceive us, and we, them, by a kind of reaction, without either they or we taking notice of it. It is our machine which is playing its game. Now, the body speaks only for the body, of which fact we can never be too aware. Opinion, or the contagion of imagination, is the most fecund principle of errors and disorders which ravages the Christian world. We must at all times return into ourselves, to compare what men say to the responses of the inward Truth. We must consult reason, which places each thing in its rank, and which does not confuse the esteem we owe to persons with the scorn we owe to the stupidities they advance. The approval we give to the crazy ideas of our friends confirms them in their error; and the respect we show for all the aspects of 'Persons of Quality' so inflates their courage that they attribute

some sort of infallibility to themselves, as well as the right to say and do anything that comes into their minds. Not that we must find fault with them openly. Their delicacy is extreme; they can hardly be touched without being wounded or irritated. Prudence and charity ought to govern our duties concerning them. But they need not be abused by base flatteries on account of our letting ourselves be deceived by means of the admirable relation between our bodies and those around us, which relation God has established for the good of society, and which, from the soul's point of view, is changed because of sin into a relation of dependence, though it still ought to be governed by reason and, when necessary, defied by reason.

X. In order that all judgments and movements of esteem might conform to the divine law of immutable order, and that the exterior actions which are the marks and effects of such esteem might also thus conform, we must notice that not only persons, but also their merits require our esteem. When dealing with persons, nothing is easier than to acquit ourselves of this duty, for we must render equality of esteem to equality of nature. But nothing is more difficult than to proportion esteem to men's merits. For though true merits are known only to God, natural merits have so many different relationships which should augment or diminish our esteem as well as our respect and benevolence concerning them, that it is not possible for a finite mind to know these duties with precision, or how they are to be rendered to others. Often we do not know that according to which they are to be determined.

XI. Merits can be divided into general groups: [1] free, [2] natural, [3] of the State, and [4] of Religion. The good use we make of freedom determines the nature of free merits. Natural merits consist of advantageous qualities of the mind and body. Merits of the State and of Religion consist of the responsibilities with which we are charged and the properties appropriate to acquitting ourselves of our tasks, be they civil or ecclesiastical. Each perfection is estimable by itself; but we must be careful for quite often it deserves more because of its relationships [to other factors]. A diamond is not as perfect as a gnat, but it is more estimable because of the esteem men have for it. Even those beings which have no perfection other than their nature are preferable to those whose perfections are acquired. A rough diamond does not have as much beauty as well-cut and polished glass, but it merits much more esteem, things being what they are. Thus a man of reason would pass for a fool, if, wanting to play the philosopher, he preferred a fly to an emerald, and regarded a rough diamond of great value as a mere pebble.

XII. In judging what esteem we ought to show for things and persons, it is not sufficient to consider them by themselves. The mind must reach to the various relationships they have with other, more estimable things or persons. The good graces of the Prince give comfort to the most vile persons, and the esteem men have for things ought to govern their price, and hence govern our external and relative esteem, if we are not resolved to scorn them by themselves and thus make ourselves ridiculous and contemptible. But we must be careful not to let our minds be polluted by the judgments usually made of things. Our

esteem can only be relative, if the merit is only relative. For though men esteem gold and silver more than copper and iron or the organic bodies of flies, it is not necessary to render esteem to gold or silver, but to men who have false judgment of those things. We need not judge persons or things as men judge of them, men who attribute imaginary perfections to be objects of their passions. But, whether or not they are mistaken in their judgments, we must esteem what they estimate with perhaps no reason, by ourselves using a relative esteem, because in society it is general esteem which governs the prices of things.

XIII. Since relative merit is often much greater than personal merit, and since our duties ought to be governed as much by relative merit as by personal merit, nothing is more difficult than to judge what we ought to do in these infinite combinations of different merits. In some circumstances necessity holds sway: e.g. it becomes necessary to fail in what we owe to a parent, in some degree; or in what we owe to a man who has rendered us some service, or who has some employment in society and renders some service to the State. What is to be done? What will be the common measure to discover the magnitude of our duties precisely? Certainly, though immutable order includes it, it is not exactly known to us; and if it were, there are often so many relations to compare, that we would never know how to resolve the issue, if we waited for evidence to show us precisely what we ought to do.

XIV. It is well known that, all things equal, some relatives must be preferred to others, parents over friends, our prince to our parents and friends. But must we prefer one relative to four, or to eight friends? This is what is embarrassing. For we must at the same time take note of the rights of the related person, of friendship, and of society. So that it often happens that we ought to prefer our enemy to a friend – for example, an enemy who is the friend of our relatives and valued by the prince for service to the State, over our friend who is a person useless to the State or who has only coldness for those we ought to hold most dear. Thus there is no general rule, none without thousands upon thousands of exceptions for guiding us in the duties of esteem, respect or benevolence we owe to other men. And what badly fogs up everything we can say on this question is that duties of esteem are one thing, those of respect another, and those of benevolence still another, and that often and at the same instant we have to prefer this person because of duties of benevolence, over some other person to whom we absolutely ought to render the duties of esteem or of respect.

XV. Since these, then, are the diverse circumstances which change and govern the order of our duties, and since these circumstances are impossible to foresee, therefore everyone must examine them with care and return into himself to consult the immutable law, without any regard for false interests which the passions constantly present. If this leaves us uncertain, then let us address ourselves to those who are more learned than I in these matters. Let us consult, I say, those who have much charity, prudence, and capacity, rather than those who have a memory full of certain general rules, insufficient for deciding in particular circumstances and which are often lacking in good sense and in

charity. The only general rule that I am moved to suggest at this time, a rule which is rarely followed, and which still seems to me to be the most sure, is that we must prefer the duties of friendship in Jesus Christ, and of the eternal society, over the ordinary duties of a friendship and a society which is to end with life. Let me explain:

XVI. The finite, however great it might be, cannot by itself have any relation to the infinite. Ten thousand centuries, in relation to eternity, are nothing. The relation of the extension of the whole universe to [that of] spaces which could never be limited, can only be expressed by zero. Unity, divided by a thousand million numbers whose progression may be from one to a thousand million, instead of from one to ten, will still be a fraction infinitely too large to express this relationship [between the finite and the infinite], because in effect the resultant relationship is nonexistent. This is my principle. For we possess God in the other life, and possess Him eternally. Thus the possession of the empire of the universe in relation to the possession of true goods, or of the times of enjoyment in this empire in relation to the eternity of the future life, are zero. Their relationship is null. All is eclipsed and annihilated by comparison with eternity. Human greatness and the pleasures which end with this life, and whatever you would add for your own contentment, all these will disappear when you think about them, and know that you are immortal. All of this, here, is and ought to be counted as nothing. And we agree well enough on this.[1]

XVII. Let this principle be followed, and it will be seen that if a man is the cause of another's downfall, he is more cruel than the very cruel Phalaris; that it is just for such a man to suffer as did that miserable prince, by the same fire as that into which he made others fall, and that it would have been better for him, as Jesus Christ said, to have fallen into the sea with a stone around his neck.

XVIII. On the other hand, it will be seen that if a man works under Jesus Christ for the construction of the eternal Temple, he works under the great Architect to whom no other is comparable. Then his work will endure eternally, and the great temple of Solomon will appear as nothing – that temple which was the home of the living God and the glory of a whole people.

XIX. It will be seen that a deformed body, a bizarre mind, a lively and disordered imagination, a man without honor in this world, with neither goods nor friends nor any advantageous quality, but who is, in the bottom of his being, a pious man who fears and loves his God, is infinitely more worthy of our esteem than the most handsome man in the world, the most endearing, the most honored for his admirable qualities, who yet at the bottom of his being has somewhat less religion. Certainly we would not dare to say that God, the just judge, prefers the latter to the former. Thus, we are obliged to prefer the former ourselves, provided we are sufficiently convinced of the difference in the piety.

XX. That someone might have more esteem for the quality of being a doctor than for that of being a lawyer, is a matter of indifference. It depends on customs, which change according to locale and the times. But that someone might have more esteem for the quality of being a prince than that of being a Christian, of being a gentleman than of being a priest according to the order of

the Son of God, that is not a matter of indifference. Not that we ought not render to our prince duties quite other than those rendered to our priest – the former has the sovereign power; the fullest respect and obedience in all things should be rendered to him.

XXI. Suppose I have two relatives or two friends, one of whom is a good missionary who does useful work for the building of the Church and the other is accomplished in the human sciences, plane geometry and learned in philosophy. The latter knows the histories of all the nations, and speaks their languages. But I do not see that his learning has advantageous consequences for the eternal society. It seems to me that I see the contrary. Which of the two is the most estimable? Suppose each needs my help; which is to be preferred? Certainly it will be the good priest, the good catechist scorned by the world, and not the learned man whom the world adores. Of course I shall give to this latter the greatest marks of esteem in every encounter with him, for fear of wounding his hypersensitivity. For those who have what are, according to appearances or to the judgments of men, the great talents, believe that everything is their due. In order not to offend them, we may sometimes render them honors which they do not deserve – for this is a charity, and charity ought to govern our external actions, and sometimes even by condescending to the false judgments of others. But as for my esteem and benevolence, I owe them to those who have the most relation to the eternal society, and who prefer it to all others, even if they be my declared enemies and the least of men in the eyes of the corrupt world.

XXII. In some circumstances it is necessary either to scandalize our neighbor, or to lose honor and life. [Sometimes] we cannot easily defend truth without making the one who attacks it look ridiculous, without making his position contemptible. We cannot render service to our friend, or even to our prince, without injuring that charity we ought to have in Jesus Christ for a foreigner, a stranger; we might, in that case, be the cause of his damnation. How are we to determine these situations, and an infinity of others like them? Nothing is more clear according to the principle I have posited. For since everything which is related to the infinite, itself becomes infinite through this relation, therefore no regard may be had for the claims of friendship or current society, when there is a question concerning the eternal society.

XXIII. Nevertheless, care must be taken that in preferring spiritual advantage to any other thing, we do not unjustly offend our friends. Justice must always be rendered, before exercising charity. It is not permissible to steal in order to marry a girl whose loss we fear. The grace of Jesus Christ is able to remedy these disorders. We must not give a friend grounds to break off the friendship, by omitting those duties which he has a right to expect, thus hurting his feelings in order to help someone else's Prudence must govern the duties of charity, and attempt to foresee the consequences of our actions. But it seems to me that it can be said, in general, that there are no principles more sure and more extensive than that former one, i.e. always to keep our eyes on the rights of the eternal society, whenever they are mixed with others – which almost always happens.

NOTE

1. Cf. *Pensées*, Brunschvicg 233 (Lafuma #451).

Chapter Eight

Duties of benevolence and respect. We ought to procure true goods for all men, not relative goods. How does a man acquit himself of the duties of benevolence? Unjust complaints of worldly people. The duties of respect ought to be proportioned to the share of power.

I. Most of the things I have said concerning duties of esteem may be applied to the duties of benevolence and those of respect. Nevertheless it is appropriate to say a bit more here, in order to make the nature and obligations of these duties more distinctly understood.

II. Regarding duties of benevolence or charity, they are generally to be rendered to all men, though there may be certain particular goods which we ought not to wish upon nor procure for some persons, or in some circumstances. But true goods, which we can give without depriving ourselves of them, and without depriving anyone else of them, these goods ought never to be refused to anyone whomsoever. We must never hide the truth, the nourishment of the mind, from those who are in any condition to receive it. We must set a good example for the whole world. We must never omit anyone in our prayers and in the mass. We must never refuse the sacraments to anyone really disposed to receive them. These are all true goods, related to the eternal society. And since God wants all men to be saved and to come to an awareness of truth, whoever refuses to render the duties of Christian charity to someone resists the plans of God and injures that society we have with Him through Jesus Christ, and injures it at its principle.

III. But since earthly goods are not, properly speaking, goods, since their true value depends on the relation they can have with true goods, and since earthly goods cannot be shared without being divided up, it often turns out that we ought not to share them with some people. For example, if a father is overly tender toward children debauched or disposed to debauchery, and if he gives them money, then he is the cause of their disorders, and wrongs the poor who really need his help, in the same way that giving a sword to a madman or a man carried away by anger is the real cause of the resulting murder. The prodigal steals from the poor, and by his indiscreet spending kills the souls of his companions in debauchery. A person who gives a drunken house-servant the freedom to drink at his own discretion, does him a good which prevents the duties of charity and friendliness. In a word, whoever gives some power to powerless minds, which can neither consult nor follow Reason, is the cause of

their sin and of all the evils which follow from their abuse of that power.

IV. These truths are incontestable, and their reasonableness is clear. Money, for example, is not, properly speaking, a good, since we can neither really enjoy it nor possess it because minds do not possess bodies. Furthermore, since it is a good which cannot be shared without being divided into parts, therefore love as benevolence ought to distribute it in a way to make it useful and to become a good, or rather to become a proper means for acquiring the good in the hands of those who receive it. Otherwise we fail twice over, in what is owed to our neighbor: We injure the person to whom the money is given, and also all those to whom it is not given and who by the laws of charity have a true right to it.

V. But pain and humiliation, which in themselves are true evils, become goods in several situations. Love as benevolence, which we ought to have for all men, should influence us to mortify those over whom we have authority and who deserve it, in order to draw them away from their disorders by fear and chastisement. A mother who does not want to allow somebody to cut off the gangrenous arm of her child is in fact cruel. But she would be even moreso if she let him corrupt his mind and heart with pleasures and overindulgence. A friend who silently allows his friend to be destroyed by secret intrigues, or who himself enters in to some commerce for profit, which is disadvantageous to the friendship he has avowed, is a faithless friend, a man unworthy of the society of other men. But an even more faithless friend is the one who, out of fear of saddening us or mortifying us, lets us fall into hell, or who, by flattering our passions, joins himself to the only enemies we have that can blind us and make us lost.

VI. Who, then, is able to render the duties of charity and benevolence to his neighbor? Surely, he is the one who knows the vanity of goods which pass away, and the solidity of future goods, the immobility of the heavenly Jerusalem, based on the unshakable rock, the beloved Son of the Almighty. Such a person compares time to eternity, and follows the great principle of Christian morality, to measure the duties of friendship and civil society by those of the society which links us to this world by grace and binds us forever in heaven by means of the perpetual communion of a good which will be given completely and to all. He is the one, finally, who constantly thinks on the entirely divine society we are to have with the Father through the Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, which is [both] the mutual love of the Father and the Son and also the principle of that happy love which shall unite us to God for all time. Such a man, and only such a man, is able to render to his neighbor the duties of benevolence. All others lack charity, and, far from loving us with love which is owing to us, and which is the second of the greatest commandments of the Christian law, do not know what are the essential obligations toward us. The commerce which such people have with us, their friendship and society, will be the fatal cause of our evils, rather than the happy principle of our repose and joy.

VII. No matter how often people say that the laws of civil society must be separated from those of Christian charity, it still seems to me that they are

inseparable in practice. The citizen of my town is already, by grace, a citizen of the Holy City. The subject of my Prince is a servant in the House of God. *Now ye are no more strangers and foreigners*, says St. Paul [*Ephes.* 2:19–20], *but fellow citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST himself being the chief cornerstone: in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an Holy Temple in the Lord.* Can I then enter into the plans of a friend, who in order to get himself established in town, risks what is established for him through Jesus Christ in heaven? Can I, by my advice and my friends, forward his ambition and so put him, who lacks that firmness and fearlessness of mind necessary in government subalterns, put him, I say, in a situation which would make any enlightened man afraid? A friend trembles for his friend when he sees him in danger. A mother becomes frightened when she sees her child climbing high places. And I, would I have no fear for a relative or dear friend in Jesus Christ whom I see surrounded on all sides by terrifying precipices, who wants nevertheless to climb to a place which would dizzy the strongest heads?

VIII. This present life must be considered as it relates to the one which follows, to the one which will not be followed by any other. The society we are now forming will only be durable inasmuch as it is the commencement of the one which shall have no end. It is for the second society that the first one was established. It is in order to merit heaven, that we are living on earth. I often repeat this truth, because we must be well convinced of it. It must be deeply engraved in our memory. It must be constantly run through our minds, for otherwise the continuous action of sensible objects would make us lose recollection of it. If we are thoroughly convinced of it, if we make it the rule of our judgments and desires, we shall not find anything so bad that it does not procure for us some goods we would scarcely have esteemed. We shall not follow a path of conduct which inclines only to render us happy on earth, prior to the time of reward. We shall instead follow the path which leads us where we ought to incline, toward that perfection which makes us agreeable in the eyes of God and worthy to be bound together with Him in the eternal society through Jesus Christ our Lord.

IX. But since men have only a weak and abstract idea of the grandeur of future goods, they rarely think about them, and cannot think about them without much effort. For only sensible ideas stimulate the soul; only the presence of a good or an evil affects it and sets it in motion. And since, on the other hand, the imagination and senses are incessantly, vividly struck by the objects around us, we think of them all the time and always with some motion of passion. Because we naturally judge the solidity of goods by the impression they make on our minds, we regard external objects with esteem, we desire them with ardor, we embrace them with pleasure. Thus we come to believe that those goods which stop us along the way, rather than joining up with us to help us catch the prey always escaping us, are goods having no affinity with us.

X. Dogs are set off with a thousand happy expectations as soon as they see preparations for the hunt. Ardent for the prey, they mechanically excite each

other, and often even excite the person who is to take them out, by means of jumpings, springings, somersaults which call forth still more of the same from others, all machines (at least those of the same species) being made mutually to imitate each other. We pick the most ardent, the one who takes the greatest part in the hunt, and lock him up: then what moanings, what howlings! What sensible marks of a most cruel pain! All this is only the play of the machine. It is the same with those who doe not know true goods and who have a passion in their head. If we do not enter into their plans, if we do not favor them, if we oppose them in their passion, they will not cease from reproaching us, saying we fail in our duties to society, to friendship, to family ties, that we are making them unhappy, that we have declared ourselves their persecutors. If we convince them of their passion by using reason, they say we want to play Cato. If we try to restrain them by using religion, we are playing the devout, we are becoming bigots. It is the machine which is playing its game, and which will continue to play it. The devout will continue to be taken as bizarre and capricious, as lacking nobility or friendship or agreeableness. They will be avoided all their lives, as people with whom one cannot establish any society. People will say society cannot be established with them except by hoping to procure the same goods as they seek. Now, persons of piety seek the true goods, for which those who have a taste and feeling only for the objects of the passions do not sense any inclination at all.

XI. Since good people are truly animated by charity, they never break with those who live in disorder, out of resentment. They always hope to restrain a disorder by example, by patience, counsel, by gifts of grace. Since they are convinced of the truth of their own feelings and are penetrated by the sweetness of the true goods which they already enjoy by a sort of foretaste, they think only of making visible to others that which they see themselves. They even want to give others a taste for the fruitful source of all pleasures. Their horror of vice animates them, and makes them speak a language which depresses those who find themselves happy only by following the agreeable motions of their passions. But that only makes us debauched, where by debauchery I mean not regarding the immutable Order as the law or inviolable rule of conduct, and where by debauched people I mean those who find reason to be an insupportable yoke. The result of this is, as I have said, that a debauched person ordinarily regards more self-governed people as persecutors. He avoids their conversation with a sort of horror, and does not want to form any type of society with them, persuaded as he is, within himself, that they will not forsake solid goods to enter into his plans and run with him after phantoms which disappear as soon as they are embraced.

XII. But this type of person does not fail to complain that we are confusing the laws of religion with those of nature, that duties are good for nothing in this world, that others are headstrong and even dishonest. They want others to act as good relatives, good friends, good citizens with them, but not as people informed by feelings they do not taste or approve of. But that is not possible. We can only act according to our lights. Can one who sees clearly let a blind

man fall over a precipice, without crying out and restraining him? And would that blind man be right to complain of the service rendered to him, by saying to his friend: "Let me be – do you think you are better than I? We are all of us blind: believe me, you have been warned. Have I not more interest in my own conservation that you? So follow me in blindness, accompany me; I feel strongly that I am on the most beautiful path in the world".

XIII. If I render service to my friend according to his desires, I lose him, and I lose myself with him. So, it is a prejudice which blinds me. Perhaps he has some reason to complain to me. But it is not reasonable if he imagines that I am renouncing our friendship, or if he himself renounces it. If this friend were not a Christian nor capable of becoming one, if death were going to annihilate all of us as we are, I would perhaps join with him in a society such as he wishes, and have for him a friendship such as he has for me. I could then be a good relative, friend, citizen, according to his ideas of these qualities. But eternity changes the face of things, and it is the ultimate folly not to take note of this.

XIV. A Christian, a priest, a gentleman, a friend – these are not four different people. When the gentleman shows up in hell, where will the priest and friend be? These qualities being inseparable in the same person, if the priest believes he has a right to play the gentleman, it is evident that he errs. And if I counsel him differently for each of his various qualities, it is certain that I abuse him. When qualities are inseparable, it is the most excellent which is to govern all. And though we could make abstractions when it is only a question of reasoning in the clouds, everything must be joined and taken together when we have to act.

XV. Hence, whether we give alms to the poor, visit the sick and prisoners, whether we instruct the ignorant or assist friends by our counsel, or do any other act of charity or duty, everything must be related to the salvation of our neighbor, and thought must constantly be taken that we are living among Christians, and thus must do those things required of us by the eternal society we all have in Jesus Christ. Sinners, heretics, even pagans must be assisted, because they are able to enter into that blessed society; and we ought to plea all the more to those who are excluded, than we would to those who are enslaved in a foreign land. We ought to work with more ardor to get them to return, than to conserve this miserable life – a life, I say, which we ought to esteem highly only because it is a time related to eternity, and a time wherein eternity can be deserved by the grace of Jesus Christ, the sovereign priest of true goods which he distributes to men to encourage them to enter with Him into a communion of happiness.

XVI. Concerning duties of respect, that is, of exterior and relative submission, since they are owed to power, it is not for us to proportion them to the merit of persons, nor to govern them according to our lights in relation to the needs of the eternal society we have in Jesus Christ. Instead, we must follow the customs and laws of our State, where God has caused us to be born. It is a duty of justice to render respect and tribute to those to whom God has given power over us. Whether or not they are good people, whether or not they are Chris-

tians, and do or do not abuse our contributions, is of no matter. The reason for this is that it is God whom we honor in their person, because all honor is relative, and ought only to stop at the one who truly possesses power. Thus, we commit an injustice against the prince when we refuse to render him the respect due to him, and it is a formal disobedience to the King of Kings, to refuse to submit ourselves and give sensible marks of that submission to those whom He has established to take His place in the world. The first Christians rendered to the Roman emperors, who cruelly persecuted Jesus Christ through them His members, all respect, all the submission, all the relative honor which was owing to the power of God in which the emperors participated; the Christians knowing all the while that honor is properly due only to God, and is related to him only according to these words of St. Paul: *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever* [*I Tim.* 1:17]. They well knew that duties of respect need not be proportioned to the utility of the Church, or, rather, that they are to be proportioned to it (since it is the grand or unique design of God), but that this is never done better than when Christians render them with all possible exactitude. For in fact that is the method of the sovereigns, who are always jealous of their glory and authority, and who then favor the Christians over all other societies in their empire. But we must examine at greater length our duties in relation to the different social conditions of others.

Chapter Nine

Duties owing to sovereigns. Two sovereign powers. Natural rights of these two powers. Rights of concession; obedience of subjects.

I. All the duties which ought to be rendered to powers by participation may, in general, be reduced to the duties of respect and those of obedience. Duties of respect depend on laws and customs observed in a state. They consist of certain sensible and external marks of submission which the mind renders to God in the person of a superior. These duties differ according to circumstances of place and time. Sometimes we prostrate ourselves before a sovereign, sometimes we put one knee on the ground, or go completely to our knees; often we only bow deeply and take off our hats. Sometimes we even remain covered in his presence, without loss of the respect which is his due. These are only arbitrary ceremonies, which are governed by usage.

II. But what is essential to morality is that the mind must itself be respectful in the presence of the prince as image of true power, and this in proportion as the prince currently exercises the authority he has received, or as he clothes himself, so to speak, with the power and majesty of God. For we owe more respect to the King sitting on his throne of justice than to that same king in any of a thousand other circumstances, just as we do to the bishop performing his episcopal functions, over any other encounter with him. Hence we find ourselves naturally inclined to measure the respect owing to grandeur and power in proportion as it makes itself felt. Surely, when we are in the presence of the Almighty, our minds must be prostrated. But though we are always before God, we are in His presence in a special manner when approaching this superior who is His image. It is not sufficient to assume an outward air of respect and fear. The mind, too, must humble itself, and respect the grandeur and power of God in the majesty of the prince.

III. Since it costs us almost nothing to render the duties of respect to such powers, and since even the brain is built in such a way that the imagination freely silences itself before the glitter which surrounds them, I need speak no more of them. But since precise obedience to their orders is [something else again, namely] a continuous sacrifice, even more difficult to accomplish than slaughtering their victims, therefore self-love is an irreconcilable enemy of obedience. Few people acquit themselves of this duty in a Christian way, though the One Whom they honor in the person of the prince, the One of Whom they have their expectation, will be their sole reward. Almost everyone excuses

himself as much as he can from rendering an obedience he finds uncomfortable, and some others obey unjust commandments poorly because they did not have a precise understanding of the order of duties. Now, since different powers have different rights, their various interests mix in such a way that it is very difficult to recognize just what we ought to obey. At such times everyone follows his own fancy or particular utility, lacking principles able to govern his actions. I am going to try to explain some such principles, which could make it possible for the mind more distinctly to recognize its duties.

IV. There are only two sovereign powers in the world, the Civil and the Ecclesiastical – the prince, in monarchies, and the bishop. The prince is image of almighty God, and is His minister on earth; the bishop is the image of Jesus Christ, and His Vicar in the Church. The prince holds to God alone, just as does the bishop, for his authority over other men. Both of them ought to make use of it only as does God, that is, in relation to immutable Order, universal Reason, the inviolable law of all intelligences and of God Himself. Nevertheless, the prince has a more absolute power than the bishop. He has the authority to make laws, and is not subject to them. He can act imperiously without having to give a reason for his conduct to any man. For it seems that he has more relation to God as power than to God as reason, more to God clothed in glory and majesty than to God made man and like unto us, to Jesus Christ in His glory than to Jesus Christ humiliated on earth and clothed in our baseness and infirmity. But the bishop has more relation to God as Wisdom, as Reason incarnated and clothed in our weaknesses, than to God as absolute and independent power; to Jesus Christ on this earth, conversing familiarly with men, than to Jesus Christ glorious and established sovereign Lord of all the nations of the world. *You know*, says Jesus Christ to His Apostles, *that the kings of the earth act as masters, and that the great treat others imperiously. Let it be not so among you .... The Son of man is not come to be served, but to give service and to pour out His blood for the salvation of men* [*Matt.* 20:25–28]. But this is not to say, I repeat, that the sovereigns have a right to use their authority without reason. Not even God has such a miserable right. He is essentially just, and universal Reason is His inviolable law. But the abuse of ecclesiastical authority is more criminal before God than is that of royal authority – not only because there is an infinite difference between spiritual and temporal goods, but also because ecclesiastical power acting haughtily defames the character which it bears from Jesus Christ, that of Reason, even humbled Reason, proportioned to the capacity of men in order to instruct them for their salvation.

V. The aim of establishing each of these two powers is quite different from the other: civil power is established to conserve civil societies. Ecclesiastical power is meant to establish and conserve the heavenly society which is begun on earth and never ends. The duty of the prince is concerned with the peace of the state, the happiness of the people. That of the bishop, with the peace of the Church of Jesus Christ. The prince ought to conserve and augment the goods necessary for temporal life. The bishop ought by his preaching and example, to enlighten the people, and as minister of Jesus Christ he ought to pour out

inward grace, through the sacraments, to all the members of the Church, and thus communicate the life of the spirit to those submissive to him. In a word, the power of the prince is for the sake of his subjects' temporal concerns, that of the bishop for the sake of his children's spiritual concerns.

VI. Taking this as our first principle, we must accept as a second one, that since God is the absolute master of all things, his orders give the status of law to all means necessary and reasonable for carrying out those orders. A valet who receives an order from his master promptly to take an important message to the master's friend, has no right to take the neighbor's horse in order to carry out the order, because his master has no such right. But since God is the absolute Lord of all things, when he says to St. Peter, *Feed my sheep* [*John* 21:15], or when he orders the King to conserve his subjects in peace, he gives (insofar as Order permits it, for Order is an inviolable Law), he gives, I say, an absolute right to these two sovereign powers, over all things necessary to carry out his wishes. *Hence the essential and primitive natural rights of temporal sovereignty are, as far as order permits, all those means necessary to the conservation of the State; and the natural rights of ecclesiastical power are all those means necessary to the building of the Church of Jesus Christ.*

VII. But since the Church and the State are composed of the same people, who are at the same time citizens and Christians, children of the Church and subjects of the Prince, it is not possible that these two powers, which ought to be mutually respected and to be absolute and independent in execution of their tasks, will exercise their jurisdiction and carry out the orders of their common master, if they are not perfectly in accord, and if in certain circumstances they do not even mutually cede to one another something of their rights. Thus it is that the prince, by the concession of the Church, has the right to nominate persons for several benefices, and the Church, by the concession of the prince, now possesses temporal goods. Such rights are not at all natural ones, because they are not natural or necessary consequences of the commission which these diverse powers received from God. They are rights by concession, which depend on mutual agreement, whose end ought only to be that which God had in establishing these two powers.

VIII. Since the Church of Jesus Christ, the eternal Temple, is the great, or rather the sole plan of God, since societies and kingdoms of this world will perish as soon as the work of Him who alone is immutable in His plans shall be accomplished, it is clear that the state is related, and ought to serve the church, rather than the church being for the glory or even for the conservation of the state. Thus one of the principal duties of a Christian prince is to furnish Jesus Christ with the materials appropriate for sanctification by His grace, under the care of the bishop, to form the spiritual edifice of the Church. It is chiefly for this purpose that the prince ought to conserve the state in peace, require that his subjects be taught basic sciences which perfect the mind and govern the heart, and see to it that the laws which punish crimes and injustices are rigorously observed. For a people well-educated, and submissive to reasonable laws, are more able usefully to receive the influence of grace, than are a brutal, vicious

and ignorant people. So too, he must make his authority serve the observation of the ordinances of the church councils, and retain the people in the obedience they owe to their mother the Church of Jesus Christ. For, finally, the church and the state have such a close union with each other, that whoever disturbs the state, disturbs the church composed of the same members, and whoever makes a schism in the church is truly a disturber of the public peace.

IX. But whether or not a Prince has this grand design of making an immortal glory for himself by working for eternity, by working for the construction of a work which will endure eternally, it is not for individuals to criticize his conduct. And provided that he requires nothing except through the *natural* rights given him by the commission which he has from God, we owe him obedience in all things, no matter what dignity [or rank] we have in the Church.

X. It is not for me to take certain principles I have just discussed and derive from them those consequences which include, in particular, the duties of those who have a right to command. To do so is more difficult than one might think. We must consider many particular circumstances, which change or determine our duties. It is for sovereigns to examine their obligations before God, in the light of the immutable Order and the divine law, rather than deferring to the counsels of men, who are almost always flatterers. Sovereigns must also consult the fundamental laws of the state, and consider them as the ordinary rules of their conduct. Bishops, too, are obliged to follow the rules of the church, which they have promised to observe with dedication, unless they want to abuse their authority and the power of Jesus Christ.

XI. But as for the subjects, it seems certain to me that they ought to obey blindly when only their self-interest is involved. For, providing that by obeying one of the two powers, we do not fail either in what we owe to God or to the other power, we ought doubtless to obey. It is establishing ourselves as judges over our sovereign, to criticize his conduct. It is attributing a sort of independence to oneself, to want to render obedience only according to one's own lights. It is a contempt of power, and a revolt against it, to pretend that it ought to give reasons for its action to any others except the One Who established it. But, once again, this is when nothing is commanded of us against the power which represents Him. For since the obedience we render to the sovereign is due only to God and refers only to Him, it is clear that we can and that we must disobey him when he commands what God prohibits, either by Himself or through the divine and immutable law or through one of the powers He has established.

XII. But when the eternal law does not respond to our attention by giving its evidence to us, or when written laws are obscure, and the two sovereign powers give us opposing orders, it is necessary that we be instructed in their natural rights, and derive from those the consequence which ought to govern our conduct. We must have recourse to enlightened persons, and especially carefully to examine the circumstances and consequences of the commandment given to us. And finally, if we see ourselves to be obliged, because of the obedience we owe to God, to disobey some one of the powers which represent

Him, we must do it without fear and in a spirit of generosity, with all the respect we ought in dignity to render to the constituted authorities. For, though it may not always be permissible to obey these established powers of God, which are not at all infallible, it will almost never happen that we may lose respect for them, whatever abuse they are making of their authority. Since they do not lose their dignity and character by unjust commandments, we must always honor God in their persons. And authorities, for their part, must remember that they have a master who will treat them as they have treated their subjects, and that like the latter, they ought to submit themselves to the divine law, to which, so to say, God himself is submissive. And however persuaded they may be of their right to make others obey in certain difficult and embarrassing circumstances, they ought not to find fault when we hesitate or do not obey promptly. For men must not be forced to act against their conscience. They cannot all have the same feeling, when there are great difficulties to surmount in order to clarify the order of their duties. They must be led by reason. And when they are not sufficiently enlightened to recognize it, but yet are not remiss in those duties which are known to them, certainly they deserve compassion and patience.

XIII. What I have just said of sovereign powers ought to apply to subalternate powers. We owe to a magistrate, a governor, or whomever executes the prince's orders, the same obedience as to the prince, just as we owe to the prince the obedience we owe to God, the principle of omnipotence. We ought not to render to them such a deep respect, nor such a general and blind obedience as to the sovereign, just as we ought not to obey the sovereign as we do the divine law and power. This is because they are not allotted all of the prince's power, any more than the prince is clothed in all the power and infallibility of God. But we owe them obedience in proportion to their powers and to our knowledge of their executing the wishes of their master and our own. If we are persuaded that they are making an encroachment on us, or obliging us to duties of which the prince has not heard or does not approve, then we may exempt ourselves from such exaction by tact, or by ways which do not injure that respect which is their due because of the person they represent. We ought even to enlighten the prince about these encroachments, and if he is inaccessible, we ought to presume that he is referring the issue to his ministers, and then we must, humbly and without complaint, make to God that sacrifice of goods which belong to Him, and which He has given us in order to offer them to Him, thereby learning more solid ones of which no power could ravish us. We must, with a truly Christian generosity, mark the contempt we have for impermanent goods with a prompt obedience when they are concerned, and regard the Cross of Jesus Christ, not as the instrument of our torment, but as the chariot of our triumph and glory. It is the cross which ought to guide us, as our precursor and model, to the eternal Thrones from which we shall, with Him, judge the great of the earth, on that day which will deprive them of their power, when the fire will devour their riches and make all their grandeur disappear.

Chapter Ten

Domestic duties of husband and wife. Principle of these duties. Those of fathers concerning their children, in relation to the eternal society, and to civil society. On their instruction in the sciences and morals. Parents ought to be their example, and guide them by Reason. They have no right to harm or insult their children. Children owe them obedience in all things.

I. Since those who govern the state do not have a continuing relation to all the particular people of whom it is composed, and since there are many people who never receive any command from their sovereign or his ministers, what I have just said in the preceding chapter is not of such a wide application as is the explication of the mutual duties of a woman and her husband, of children and parents, of masters and servants, of a judge and those in his province, of the society of persons who see each other at all times and who have a thousand different relations between each other. Thus we must be most particularly instructed in these domestic duties. I am going to attempt to establish the relevant principles, so that each person may easily draw the consequences from them.

II. The closest union people can have with each other is that of man and wife, because this union is the express symbol of the union of Jesus Christ with His church. That union is indissoluble, because, God being immutable in His plans, the marriage of Jesus Christ and His church will endure eternally. It is a natural union, and the two sexes, by their particular construction, and in consequence of the admirable laws of the body-soul union, have the most violent passions for each other, because the love of Jesus Christ for his church, and that of his church for its Lord, Savior and Spouse is the greatest love that can be imagined. This is clear from the Song of Songs. For, finally, man and woman are reciprocally made for each other. If we could conceive that God could have formed them without having any plan to unite them one to the other, we could also be able to see how the incarnation of the Word would not have been necessary. Then we would understand a way in which the principal or sole plan of God, which plan is more particularly prefigured in the marriage of man and woman than by any other thing, would not be the establishment of his church in Jesus Christ, Who is its base and foundation, in Whom even the universe subsists, because only He draws the whole work of God from its profane state and by his quality as Son renders it worthy of the majesty of the

Father.

III. This principle makes it understandable that the mutual duties of Jesus Christ and the church are the model of those between wives and husbands, and that the marriage of Christians, an imitation of that of the first man and woman, being the symbol of Jesus Christ and the church, its consequences and circumstances ought not to belie the reality it represents. This is why St. Paul draws from this same principle the duties men and women ought mutually to render to each other. Here are his words:

IV. *Let wives be subject to their husbands as to the Lord: because the husband is the head of the wife, as Jesus Christ is the head of the Church which is His body, of which He is also the savior. Therefore as the church is subject to Jesus Christ, wives also ought to be subject to their husbands in all things. And you husbands, love your wives as Jesus Christ loved the church, and gave himself up to death for it, to sanctify it after having purified it in the baptism of water by the word of life; so that it might appear before him in glory, with neither spot nor wrinkle nor any other fault, but all holy and pure. Thus husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. One who loves his wife, loves himself. Now no one ever hated his own flesh. On the contrary, one nourishes it and carefully conserves it as Jesus Christ nourishes and conserves his church, because we are the members of his body; we are part of his flesh and bones. This is why a man will leave his father and mother to be joined to his wife; and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great sacrament and for myself, I say that it is in Jesus Christ and in the church. Let everyone of you therefore love his wife as himself, and let the wife fear and respect her husband.* [*Ephes.* 5:22–33].

V. From these admirable words of St. Paul, we easily see that a husband ought to nourish his wife and abundantly give her all things necessary for her conservation, that he ought to assist her and lead her by his wise counsel and console her in her sorrows and weakness; that he ought, in a word, to love her as himself, and, after the example of Jesus Christ, expose his life to defend hers. And we see that the wife ought, for her part, to obey her husband as her Lord, fear him and respect him, think of pleasing only him, and guide her family only by reliance on his authority and his designs, provided that his designs are related to, or at least are not contrary to those of God.

VI. Now, the design of God in establishing marriage is not only to furnish the state with members from whom it is composed or who defend it to maintain its glory and grandeur, but rather, and chiefly, marriage is to furnish Jesus Christ with material for the eternal Temple, with members of His church, perpetual adorers of the Divine Majesty. For married people are not only the symbols, but also the natural ministers of Jesus Christ and the church. God has not joined them together only to prefigure his great design, but also to serve it. It is true that, since sin, they only procreate for the demon, by way of an act wholly animal and brutal, and that without Jesus Christ our mediator, it would even be a dreadful crime to communicate to one's wife that miserable fecundity to beget an enemy of God, to damn a soul forever, to labor for the glory of

Satan, and for the establishment of the infernal Babylon. But Jesus Christ is come to remedy the disorders of sin. And it is permissible, through the sacrament of marriage, symbol of his eternal covenant, to give, so to speak, children to the demon, so that Jesus Christ might have the glory of carrying them away from the demon and after having washed them in His blood, letting them enter into His edifice.

VII. The chief duty of parents is to raise their children in such a way that they do not lose the innocence and holiness of their baptism. Married people can live in continence, as did Adam and Eve before their sin; Jesus Christ is not lacking in materials for the construction of His Temple. Again, how many nations are in ignorance of our reconciliation! But through their ambition, their avarice, their disorders, their bad example, and even merely by their negligence in instructing their children, they deprive them of the possession of true goods and make them fall back into the service of the demon, in which they are born and from which they have been emancipated; this is one of the greatest crimes men are capable of committing.

VIII. A father may make his children the honor of the family, the delight of the town, the support of the state; he may leave them in a land of great goods and all possible luster – yet, he is a cruel father, and even more, delights in their mischief in such a way that they will only feel its ill effect, if there is not any remedy for them. He is impious, and even more than that, to be building the profane Babylon with that which he has destroyed of the sacred temple of the living God. He is mad, and more, because there never could be a more notorious folly, a more gross stupidity, a more brutal and enraged hopelessness than that of a father insensitive to the inevitable alternative of the two very different eternities which will follow after the final moments; such a father builds for himself and his family only upon the edge of a precipice, subject to storms and tempests, ready to plunge down forever, pitiful victim of his own glory and pleasures.

IX. In order for a father or mother to conserve in their children the inestimable right, acquired by baptism, to the heritage of Jesus Christ, they must be constantly watchful to remove from before their eyes any objects capable of tempting the children. The parent is their guardian angel, and must lift from the earth any stone which might cause them to fall. The parent must instruct them in the mysteries which faith teaches us, and thereby lead them, bit by bit, to an awareness of the fundamental truths of religion, to strengthen them in the hope of true goods and in a genuine scorn for human grandeur. Their minds must be perfected, they must be taught how to make use of them. It is by way of reason that they are to be guided, for there is no more perfect law than that which God himself inviolably follows. But the beginning of their instruction must be made with faith: for man, and chiefly young people, are too carnal and too involved with what is outside of themselves to consult that reason which dwells within them. It must appear to them clothed in a way which strikes their senses. They ought to be subject to a visible authority, before becoming able to contemplate the evidence of intelligible truths. Further, a father ought never to give his

children what they desire, but rather everything which reason requires for them, – for reason ought to be the common law, the general rule of our wishes. Children must become accustomed to following it, as well as to consulting it. They must give reasons for their good or apparently-good desires. And we may give in to them, however slight may be their reasonability, provided we judge that they plan to follow reason. We must not quibble with them, lest we end up rebutting them. But it is an indispensable precept, that we ought to act only by reason. The mind ought never, by itself, to wish anything; for it is not a rule or law unto itself. It does not possess any power; it is not independent. It ought to desire only by way of reliance on the immutable law, because we can only act on, think about, or enjoy a good by means of reliance on divine power. This is what young people ought to know; but perhaps it is something their elders do not know. It is most assuredly something that not everyone observes.

X. We must be careful not to fill a child's memory with a thousand barely useful facts, which can only disturb and agitate a memory which has as yet little firmness and scope, and which is all too troubled and jostled by the actions of sensible objects. But we must try to get children clearly to understand the certain principles of the basic sciences. They must become accustomed to contemplating clear ideas, and especially to distinguishing between the soul and the body, and recognizing the properties and different modifications of these two substances of which they are composed. Far from confirming their prejudices, far from accepting their senses as judges of the truth, far from speaking to them of sensible objects as true causes of their pleasures and pains, we must constantly tell them that their sense deceives them, and show them how the senses can be false witnesses which contradict themselves, so as to expose to the children the senses' illusions and errors.

XI. We can die at age ten, as readily as at ages fifty or sixty. What will become of a child who dies and whose heart is already corrupted, filled with esteem for the qualities and love of sensible goods? Of what use will it be in the other world to know perfectly the geography of this world, or in eternity to know the epochs of time? All our learning will persist at death, and leads to nothing. If we know how to decline and conjugate, and perfectly understand, for example, Greek and Latin; if we should be learned in history and in the interests of princes; if we show much promise in the world for which we are not made, what good are all these vanities with which the mind and heart get filled? Are there solid rewards in heaven for these vain studies? Are there places of honor destined for those who compose a theme without mistakes? Will God judge children by some law other than that of immutable Order, other than the precepts of the Gospels, which they have neither followed nor known? Ought fathers to raise their children for the state, rather than for heaven; for the prince, rather than for Jesus Christ; for a society of several days' length, rather than for an eternal society? Moreover, we must take care because it is those best-instructed in these vain sciences who corrupt the state most, and who excite the most furious tempests in it. We may learn these sciences; but only when our minds are formed, and when we are in a condition to make good use of them.

We shall not be sent back to get instruction in the essential truths at some future time when we are no longer here, or at some time when we would no longer be able to taste them, to meditate on them and be nourished by them.

XII. Since only the effort of attention leads to an understanding of the truth, a father ought to use a thousand ways to accustom his children to making themselves attentive. Thus, I believe it is appropriate to teach them that which is most sensible in mathematics. Not that these sciences, though preferable to many others, are so estimable by themselves, but that the study of these sciences is such that we profit from them only insofar as we give attention to them. For when we read a geometry book, if our minds are not laboring to attend to it, we get nothing out of it. We must begin to get accustomed to the effort of attention in our youth, for it is at that time that the various parts of the brain are capable of all sorts of flexibility. We can then easily acquire a habit of making ourselves attentive. I have already shown [in Part I, Ch. 5] that it is this habit which comprises all the strength of the mind. Thus, those who have accustomed themselves from their youth to meditate on clear principles, and to relate effects to their causes, are capable not only of all the sciences, but also of judging firmly about all things, of following abstract principles, making ingenious discoveries, and foreseeing the consequences and outcomes of different enterprises.

XIII. But those sciences relying on memory confuse the mind, upset clear ideas, and furnish it with many probabilities of all sorts of subjects, which are our reward for not knowing how to distinguish, examine and see. And it is because we settle for probabilities that we dispute and constantly quarrel. Since only the truth can be one, indivisible and immutable, it follows that only it can unite minds closely and forever. Sciences relying on memory also naturally inspire pride, for the soul gets inflated and swelled up, so to speak, by the multitude of facts with which the head is filled. And whether the mind be filled only with space, or with useless things, positions of bodies, series of events, actions and opinions of men, it will imagine itself to be as extensive, as lasting, as full of reality as are the objects of science. It diffuses itself over all parts of the world; it goes back to past centuries; and instead of thinking of what it itself is, in the present time, and what it will be in eternity, it forgets its own country to get lost in an imaginary world, in histories composed of realities which are no longer, and chimeras which never were.

XIV. This is not to say that we ought to have contempt for history, as an example, or to study only the basic sciences which by themselves perfect the mind and govern the heart. But we must study the sciences in their proper rank. We may study history when we know ourselves, our religion, our duties; when we have a developed mind, and are thereby able to differentiate, at least to some extent, the truth of history from the imaginings of the historian. We should study languages; but only when we are good enough as philosophers to know what a language is, when we know the language of our own country well, when the desire to know the feelings of the ancients inspires in us the desire to know their language. For in this way we learn in a year what we could not learn in

ten, without that desire. One must be a man, a Christian, a Frenchman, before being a grammarian, poet, historian, or traveller. We need not want to be geometers in order to fill our heads with the properties of lines, but [it is enough of a motive that such a study will] give our minds strength, scope, and the perfection of which they are capable. In a word, we must begin our studies with the most necessary sciences, those which can contribute the most to the perfection of the mind and heart. A person who only knows how to distinguish the soul from the body, and who never confuses his thoughts and desires with the diverse motions of his machine, by knowing this single truth is more solidly learned and is in a better state to become learned, than a person who knows histories, customs and languages of all peoples, but who is yet so deeply buried, to speak figuratively, in ignorance of his own being, that he takes the subtlest part of his body to be the core of his being, and imagines that the immortality of the soul is a question which cannot be resolved.

XV. I realize that I am only speaking in paradoxes, and that long discourses would be required to persuade other men of my feelings. But let us at least open our eyes. Look – do we see that those who know Virgil and Horace best are more wise than those who have a mediocre understanding of St. Paul? Experience ought to convince those who do not want to consult reason. Then, what experience proves that a reader of Cicero is more useful than a reader of the totally divine words of eternal wisdom? We read Cicero for the Latin, it will be said. But why not read the Gospels for the Religion and Morality? Poor children! You are raised as if you were citizens of ancient Rome; you have their language and customs. No thought is taken to make you reasonable men, true Christians, inhabitants of the Holy City. I am wrong, they will say: people do think of these things, they do work on them. But, it is at least the custom not to work too much on them. St. Augustine complained about this without success,[1] and it is in vain that I torment myself. Young people will always be seen, after leaving college and when they are supposedly learned – for they almost never do any more studying – they will be seen, I say, to be ignorant in knowledge of man, of religion and morality. For can we really know man, when we cannot even distinguish the body from the soul? Do we even have the first elements of religion and morality when we are not fully convinced of original sin and the necessity of a mediator? Children are filled with the precepts of the grammarians. They know the famous Despautère by heart,[2] and the mysterious and unintelligible terms of Aristotle the orator. And that suffices – they can speak for and against all sorts of subjects. The estimable quality of being able to maintain both truth and error, without distinguishing between them! But of course it would not be fair for children to know more about this than their parents, and it would not be proper for them to be more learned than some of their teachers.

XVI. But leave it to the teachers to consult the order of their duties, and fulfill them. For I do not want parents to be obliged to instruct their children, since they are often incapable of doing so, and have other business to attend to, which they will never be persuaded is less important than that of education. But

let them at least try to make a good choice of teachers. They should not imagine that a young man who knows only Greek and Latin, and does not know himself, who is far from being able to guide himself, should yet be put in a situation of instructing the mind and governing the heart of a child. And when, hopefully, they do come across one, they should not by their example and manner destroy what a teacher builds up by his assiduity and labor. Children, because of their weakness and dependence, are extremely sensible to the language of the imagination and the senses, to airs and external behavior, and chiefly by their parents. This language is a natural one, which persuades us without thinking, which penetrates the soul, and agreeably diffuses throughout the mind both conviction and certitude, at least when it comes to us from those with whom we have the most direct connections.

XVII. A teacher teaches his students to judge of things by the principles of religion and Reason, to silence the senses, imagination and passions, and to scorn sensible objects, human grandeur, transient pleasures. An indiscreet father speaks of these false goods before his children, with such an air and tone as to excite even a stable mind, and set into motion even those least disposed to imitation. Perhaps he will also speak to them of true goods, but his discourse will be so cold and dull that he will inspire only disgust and contempt for true goods. He will tell them, a hundred times a day, and forcefully, 'Behave, don't take chances when you play, don't poke fun'. He will praise them if they show some talent at reciting passionate verses. He will show obvious approval by the look on his face, if he recognizes in them some quality of which the world approves, and he will only laugh and be amused by their serious faults, those which indicate, to anyone who understands people, a sorrowful corruption. And, if the most Christian and most sane of teachers wants to extinguish pride and self-love in them, these types of approval from an affected mother or father will inspire in the children contempt and aversion for the teacher, which will make it impossible for him ever to be useful to them. *The greatest reverence and respect should be shown to children*, says a judicious author [Juvenal]. Example and outward behavior invincibly persuade young people, when accommodated to corruption in their natures. Thus, anyone who, though saying nothing, does evil before their eyes with a joyous and satisfied air, speaks to them more strongly than one who discourses coldly on virtue and exhorts them to follow it. Nothing is more deserving of reflection than this thought, in regard to the instruction and education of youth.

XVIII. There are fathers who often treat their children imperiously; they never render justice to their children. They insult them without cause. Instead of subjecting them to Reason after having enlightened them, they imagine that the inviolable law of a child is the father's will. But the father will die, and what will then be the law of the son? It will no doubt be his own will; for he will not have been taught that there is one immortal law, immutable Order. He will not have been accustomed to obey it. The son will not even await his father's death, old age or powerlessness to keep the son in servitude, but will early begin to make himself to be his own law. Naturally he will find it in pleasures, for that

unjust and brutal law is perhaps worth more than the wishes of an unreasonable father; at least it is more agreeable and comfortable. A young man will remain convinced of this, as soon as he has tasted its sweetness. And then, whether the father is dead or alive, the young man will find ways to obey this law and submit himself to its charms. If the father still has enough vigor and firmness to bother him about his pleasures and disturb him in his debauchery, he will regard his father as an enemy and a tyrant. And, convinced by the example and conduct of his father, namely that we must always obey our desires, the son will exploit all his own powers, and all persons over whom he will have any authority, to satisfy those desires. For, once again, he will feel currently happy, by abandoning himself to pleasures, and he will not have had enough education and experience to predict the disastrous consequences. Children must therefore be guided by Reason, as much as they can be. They have the same inclinations as do men, though the objects of their inclinations are different. And they will never be solidly virtuous if they are not accustomed to obey a law which does not die, if their minds, formed by universal Reason, are not re-formed by that same Reason, rendered sensible by faith.

XIX. No father should imagine that his quality as a father gives him absolute and independent sovereignty over his son. He is only a father because of the efficacy of God's power, and ought to command his son only according to His law. He is only a father in consequence of an animal act, in which he did not know what he was doing, that is, only experience teaches that by satisfying our passion, the species is preserved. How can an action similar to those of beasts, an action about which we ought to blush and of which I am ashamed to speak, how can such an action give one human being authority over the mind and heart of another human being? Again, a mother bears her fruit through many discomforts, and gives it to the world through extreme pains. But she did not form it and make it grow; still less is it she who gives being to the spirit which animates it. Hence she has no right to command her son except by reliance on universal Reason, just as she did not have any power to give birth to him, except by the efficacy of God's power.

XX. Nevertheless, a son should tremble when his parents are angry with him, because God, who gives and conserves his being, God who can cast him into the fires of hell, God who has all manner of rights over him, has ordained by His law that the son obey the parents, and by commandment, He gives them a right to command him. But let not the parents use that right against the will of the One from whom they received it; let them not attribute it to themselves, as some reward for a criminal act, or an act at least indecent and animal. Let them make use of it for the great design of God, the eternal Temple, the end and masterpiece of all His works. And let them labor by means of their right, not for time, but for eternity, to conserve in the members of Jesus Christ that spirit of holiness which their children have received in baptism. For their part, let the children obey their parents as they would God Himself, Whose place they take. Let them be respectful before their parents, as being in the presence of the Almighty; let them think only to please them, and enter into their designs as

much as Order permits. Perhaps they will not live longer on this earth for doing so, for that was the reward of the Jews. But they will live eternally blessed in Heaven, with the beloved Son of the living God, who was obedient to His Father even unto death – an infamous and cruel death on the cross.

NOTES

1. *Confessions*, e.g. at Bk. I, ch. 9.
2. Reference is to Jan van Pauteren, pen-name Despautère, who wrote Latin grammars which went through numerous editions; M.'s reference here is to the *Grammaticae epitome*, also called the *Despauterius minor* (1627, 1649, 1674, 1686, 1710 and 1714).

Chapter Eleven

Origin of the diversity of conditions. Reason alone ought to govern. But force is necessary because of sin. Its legitimate use is to marshall men to Reason concerning fundamental law. Duties of superiors and inferiors.

I. It is a certain truth that the differences in conditions are a necessary consequence of original sin, and that often quality, riches, and high standing all take their origin from some injustice, and from the ambition of those to whom our forefathers owed their birth. Since the injustices of our ancestors are buried in forgetfulness, and since the luster which their riches and dignities left to their families still endure, the dazzle of quality, which shines to the senses and strikes the imagination, overpowers us. And injustice, which may have been its source, now no longer felt, is not in our thoughts at all.

II. Most men, judging as they do by the impressions made on the senses, consider those who have a magnificent train of followers parading along behind, to be demigods. And instead of closing their eyes before a superb apartment, in order to judge more firmly of the personal merit of whoever lives there, they insensibly open their eyes to the beauty which attracts and enchants them, and they associate all the gold and marble by which the house is embellished, with the person living there. But a Christian philosopher looks at this magnificence without being stimulated by what astonishes and prostrates weak imaginations. And, persuaded as he is that what we own is not the same as ourselves, and the grandeur of the soul cannot endure amidst injustice and abuse of power, he therefore finds nothing more deformed than a low and contemptible soul lodged in a high building which all the world admires. And even if he finds himself obliged by his quality or custom to make himself look stimulating to the eyes of others, and however he considers the real ornaments with which the rich attempt to cover up their miserable mortality, he always feels his weakness and that of others. He is reserved and humbles himself within, and measures the great only by what merit he sees in them.

III. But though there are very few philosophers, and however philosophical we may be, we are always left surprised at the sensible impression and the unforeseen motions of rebellious imagination. And the vanity, of which man is so full, favors natural judgments formed in us in such a way that, though formed without examination of evidence, when it comes to human grandeur people always judge and will judge the esteem owing to persons by their entourage, the magnificence and splendor which surrounds them. Now these

judgments are such that everyone pronounces in favor of persons of quality, or those who have that appearance. Everyone, I say, pronounces more vividly and decisively by adopting a submissive air and respectful manners, than by words inspiring pride in men or filling their heads with grandeur. It is thus that they accustom themselves to scorning virtue and Reason in those beneath them, and to esteeming without discrimination whatever they receive in the way of attention or excitement from the quality of others. This is what makes a brutal lord treat his vassals with a kind of scorn, and makes servants listen to their master as if to virtue and Reason incarnate. Finally, this is what makes superiors fail to render to those subject to them, those duties which are due to their nature, and which makes inferiors take it as a merit to go against the divine law to carry out those orders which are given to them.

IV. Human nature being the same in all men, and made for Reason, only merit ought to distinguish us, and only Reason guide us. But, sin having left concupiscence in those who commit it as well as in their descendants, men, though naturally equal, have ceased to form a society of equality under that same law, Reason. Force, or the law of brutes, which left the lion king of the beasts, has become the mistress of men. The ambition of some and the necessity of others have obliged all people to abandon God, so to speak, Who is their natural and legitimate king, and universal Reason, their inviolable law, in order to choose visible protectors who could by force defend them against enemy force. Hence it is sin which introduced the difference in qualities or conditions into the world.[1] For sin or concupiscence being given, it is a necessity that there be differences. Even Reason requires this, because force is a law which must marshal those who no longer follow Reason. Finally, God himself approved these differences, as is evident in the Holy Scriptures.

V. But the need for remedies points to the size of the evils. We may neglect those remedies only when we have no need for them. The esteem and use we ought to make of force are based only on the miserable necessity to which we are reduced because of our contempt for Reason. But it is not necessary that those who have authority to command and judge of differences would draw any vanity from that authority. They are learning to profane it when they make use of power to serve their passions. Nothing is more sacred, nothing more divine than power. The Almighty, the natural and legitimate Lord, will treat them as they, subalternate powers, shall have treated their subjects. They [too] are removable by necessity; let them never forget this. God can depose them from their dignity, if they do not work to make Reason govern. And sooner or later death, that cruel enemy of their power, of their pleasures, will make them like other men. It will present them before the living law, which penetrates hearts and illuminates their contents. And they shall find written in the immutable and necessary Order, in eternal and ineffaceable characters, the reward or punishment for their good or evil acts. *Horridly and speedily*, says the sage, *shall he come upon you; for a sharp judgment shall be to them that are in high places. For mercy will soon pardon the meanest; but mighty men shall be mightily tormented, a sure trial shall come upon the mighty* [*Wisdom* VI: 5–6,8]. The

powerful will be powerfully tormented; the strongest will have to suffer the hardest punishments. Let superiors then regard themselves as vicars, so to speak, for Reason, the primal and indispensable law, and use their authority only against those who refuse to obey that law. Let them use force, the law of brutes, only against brutes, against those who know nothing of Reason and do not want to be subject to it. And let them hear with favor, with peace, and charitably, all their inferiors. For if they confuse their own desires with Order, and the secret inspirations of their passions with the responses of the inner Truth, then once again that same truth which they scorn will be the law by which they will be judged, and by which they will certainly be condemned, by the efficacy of which they will be eternally tormented.

VI. *If thou be made the master of a feast*, says Scripture, *lift not thyself up, but be among them as one of the rest.* You have been chosen to deal with others; do not glorify yourself over it. Live with them, one with another. *Take diligent care of them, and so sit down*, the sacred text continues, *and when thou hast done all thy office, take thy place, that thou mayst be merry with them [Eccles.* 32:1–3]. Appeal to all, then take your place, and rejoice with them that they may rejoice with one another. One family, one community, one society whose head applies himself only to conserving peace and providing for their needs, is in a continuous feast. The superior ought to take his place of honor only after having fulfilled his duties, and put himself at the head of others only to assure them and defend them, to reunite them and gladden them by his presence. Superiors, and chiefly sovereigns are called in Scripture and in the ancient authors, *shepherds of the people.* And the King of the feast, who disturbs the festival and interrupts the music, represents the chief who breaks the thread and the agreeable unity of all members of the body he is to govern, which he ought to maintain in perfect unity and mutual correspondence [*Ibid.*]. The aim of government, what it could be, is peace and charity; and the means to attain that aim is to make Reason reign everywhere, because only Reason can reunite minds and put them in agreement and get them to act in concert. For Reason is a natural and general law, which few people follow completely, but which no one dares openly scorn, and which all men glorify as to-be-followed, even when they themselves are far from it.

VII. Thus the judge in a town, the father as natural superior of the family, the master who has scholars or apprentices under him, in a word, every superior ought to inspire a spirit of reason in his inferiors, a spirit of justice and charity. He ought to follow Reason as his Inviolable law, and as theirs. He ought not to take unto himself any rights other than those [which are] means appropriate to make Reason respected and to oblige them to be subject to it. But he ought not to doubt that all these means are really his natural rights, in proportion to the commission he has received from the superior power. For the power which gives a commission, gives at the same time a right to all legitimate means of carrying it out, by that same power, provided that it or custom or especially Reason do not prescribe something particular concerning such means. The judge of a village can punish the guilty only according to the laws, but he may

prevent evil by a thousand means which his authority gives him, concerning which the laws prescribe nothing. A father can beat his children, and even be strict and discipline them with the rod; but he cannot cause them to die, nor cripple them, thus making them useless to the state upon which he himself depends and to which they belong. A teacher can beat a child, but he cannot insult him, without offending the parent who has not given the teacher this right, any more than has custom or the state. But excepting that which custom, reason, and their superiors have prescribed, teachers can consider as their natural rights all means appropriate for marshalling those under them behind Reason, but not behind their own wills. Behind Reason, I say, and not their own wills, for once again, neither judges or princes nor a father nor even God himself, if that were possible, if the Word were not consubstantial with Him, if He could prevent Himself from giving birth to it and loving it, not even God Himself, I say, has the right to make use of His power to subject men, made for reason, to a will which does not conform to it.

VIII. Nevertheless, a servant, scholar or subject ought not to criticize the wishes of his superiors. He ought to do them the honor of believing that they are reasonable, as much as he, and even moreso. And when evidence or the express commandment of God's law prescribes nothing to the contrary, he is obliged constantly to obey them, without murmur. Often he even has no right to present his reasons, to be clarified concerning his doubts. For he can only do so when that kind of freedom includes no air of contempt and cannot irritate the person in whom he ought to fear and respect the power of God Himself. But superiors, for their part, must have considerable regard for the sensitivities of others. Let them not imagine themselves to be infallible, and through their manners act haughty and proud and thereby lead those subject to them to fearing them rather than God in their person. The invisible God does not produce as much fear in weak imaginations as the sensible and menacing air of an angry father or teacher. And often, a superior animated and disturbed by some passion commits greater crimes upon his inferiors than he commits upon himself, because an unforeseen passion having blinded him, his failure is less voluntary; but the crime of those who obey him against Reason is enormous, because they freely offend God out of fear of stopping that superior or offending him.

IX. Not that a teacher ought never to act imperiously and make himself redoubtable. Reason wants him occasionally to become angry, so that as that passion mechanically spreads a terrifying appearance over his face, his appearance will impress fear into the hearts of the wicked and dispose them to obedience. And if this does not suffice, he must add threats to it, and finally get to chastisement and a kind of excess and outrage. It is absolutely necessary that power subject men to Reason and force them to obey it, whenever Reason itself, though known, does not have enough charm for them to attract them to follow it. Men regard Reason as powerless and actionless, incapable of rewarding those attached to its course, or of punishing those who follow the contrary course. Men must be delivered of this error, which is confirmed by all the

prejudices of the senses, and they must be made vividly to feel by its conduct toward them, that there are not two different divinities, Reason and power; that the Almighty is essentially Reason, and that universal Reason is almighty. Those who are powerful and reasonable among men, because of their particular relation to power and to divine Reason, are permitted to use force to oblige unreasonable minds to fear the Reason they do not love, just as they ought to use Reason to lead those who love it to unite it to power and rejoice in it, in expectation of happiness which will be given to them according to the order prescribed by Reason. Hence we are permitted to threaten, punish, and make unhappy those who scorn Reason. For, since it is even less uncomfortable to obey it without pleasure than to disobey it with pain, perhaps the fear of chastisement, making the wicked understand the magnitude of the miseries from which they will be delivered if they become reasonable, will help find themselves more disposed to follow the motions of grace, without which we cannot render to the eternal law all the obedience which is due it.

X. The passions are not bad in themselves. Nothing is better understood, nothing more useful to maintain society, provided that Reason excites and leads them. For since men are sensible, they must be taught via their senses, and be led where they ought to go by something which strikes them and gets them moving. These frigid or 'wise' teachers, lacking vivacity and passion, do not at all advance those whom they guide. For children or servants, whose minds are not yet geared for reason, walk slowly toward virtue if we do not attract them to it, if we do not constantly prod them. But they must not be excited without being enlightened, without knowing what is expected of them and that they can carry it out more easily than sustaining the evils with which they are afflicted. Since people do not come to a decision without a motive, they must be put in a condition of being able gladly to choose and voluntarily do that which has no value if it is not voluntary. Their minds must be instructed just as must their machine, and fear of evils serves only to dispose them toward the good, draw them nearer to the light, get them to contemplate the beauty of Order and love it. It is this kind of affection which ought to be encouraged in men, in the presence of and to the honor of that Reason which they have scorned. It is this affection which opens the mind and gives understanding rather than brutal chastisement – which is appropriate only for training brutes, coaching horses and dogs, and teaching men to make their own will the inviolable rule of their conduct.

XI. Inferiors are not just obliged to a prompt and precise obedience to superiors' orders, but also to their clearly understood will, even if not spelled out. If we wait for the express orders of a superior, before obeying them and satisfying them, then even if we do not have contempt for or revolt against his person, these are not enough to comprise the respect due the power and divine majesty in him. But a minister who makes himself master over his sovereign's mind, who attracts authority to himself by the liaisons he forms and by the deeds he accomplishes as minister, and gets his prince in such a situation that he learns to command the prince, deserves to be considered a rebel. An insolent

servant who, by his knowledge of his master's affairs or weaknesses, takes from him the freedom to make his wishes known [by pre-empting decisions], is often more culpable than a lazy and negligent servant who does not carry out the orders given to him. A son, in full strength of his age and mind, or who has acquired much honor and goods in the world, and who is thereby placed in such a condition that his humiliated, weak, powerless father does not dare command anything of him, has failed his father in obedience if, knowing the will of his father, he does not do it. A wife who makes herself dreaded by her too honest, too good husband, or who by her troublesome humor puts him in such a state that he dare not tell her his will, is more disobedient, however precisely she may do what he orders, than one who fears her husband according to the Apostle's precept ["Let the wife fear her husband," *Ephes.* 5:33], though she may not always do all he commands. A religious person who, by the reputation he has acquired in the world, or by his personal qualities, closes his mouth to his superiors and does not do what he certainly knows they require of him, falls into disobedience. In a word, that person leaves his post and revolts, who withdraws himself in whatever way from the obedience he owes to others; and though he be held in confidence by others, and according to the laws of those who, however, do not penetrate the heart, he will not escape the judgment of the just judge, Who penetrates all the intricacies of self love. Whoever obeys men as men, rather than as God Himself, as Religion and Reason ordain, cannot possibly fulfill all the duties of obedience. And, on the other hand, the desire to please God, by subjecting ourselves to men, guides us in such a fortunate way that we naturally do all that the most enlightened mind could prescribe for us.

NOTE

1. St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei* XIX.v.

Chapter Twelve

On duties among equals. We ought to give them the place they wish to fill in our minds and hearts. We ought to show our good inward dispositions toward them, by our expression and behavior, by real services, and by deferring superiority and excellence to them. The most lively and ardent friendships are not the most solid. We ought to have only as many friends as we can keep in real friendship.

I. Most of the duties we render to other men consist only of certain sensible marks by which we make them to understand that they have an honorable place in our hearts and minds. Men cannot learn that we have some particular esteem for their merit and qualities without some emotion and pleasure which can unite them to us. And no matter what respect we show externally, if they discover that we do not place them in our minds in that place they wish to fill, they cannot avoid feeling a displeasure which repels them away from us.[1] This is because the locale of minds is not found among bodies, but rather, the dwelling of the mind, its throne, its bed of repose has no relationship to that magnificence which strikes the senses and which is only the work of mens' hands. The mind dwells with honor in the minds of those who honor it, and it reposes with pleasure in the heart of a man full of ardor for his friend. What a glory, then, and what grandeur to possess the esteem of universal reason; and what will be the joy and the repose of those whom God will place in His heart and treat as His friends! Men's vanity ought to give birth to such thoughts in us, and the roots of pride ought to lift our minds to the felicity of having a place of honor within reason itself, and in all intelligences united to reason. For reason is an unshakable and immovable throne, and we ourselves can become sacred Temples where God eternally shall dwell; for God, pure spirit, does not dwell with pleasure in material temples, however magnificent and sumptuous they may be.

II. It is eternal wisdom, the immutable Order of justice, which ought to govern those spiritual places to be filled by substances of the same genus. But as long as we are on earth, subject to error and sin, we deserve none of them. Or, at least we do not know which one we shall deserve. Thus we ought always to take the least of them, and wait to be ranked according to the order of our virtue and merits. But men, without bothering to put themselves in the rank they have in divine reason, the indispensable rule of the One Whom they ought to possess in their created spirits, work instead only to usurp a status which they

do not deserve. They cover their faults. They show themselves on their good side; they try to attract others in order to acquire a vain glory. And when they have deceived them, or imagine that they have, they receive equivocal marks of esteem with extreme pleasure, though it is an esteem which can render them really and solidly happy and satisfied only if governed and maintained by Reason alone, once again sovereign judge of merit, alone omnipotent to reward merit forever.

III. Though honor and glory, strictly speaking are due only to God, [created] spirits may suppose that they have some honor and glory by means of the relation they have to the divine perfection, by the conformity they have with the One after Whom they have been formed. We have reason to believe that they are at least somewhat conformed to their model. We are certain that the image of the invisible God, imprinted at the base of their being, is ineffaceable. Also we can, and even ought, as long as we live with them, to give them marks of esteem and respect. And this all the moreso because we cannot acquit ourselves of our obligation to conserve charity with them, without rendering them these duties.

IV. For since men invincibly want to be happy, they cannot relate themselves to someone who scorns them unless they have an extraordinary virtue, because, in consequence of the laws established for the good of society, they feel an extreme displeasure when they discover that they are evil in another person's mind. In winter we flee from places exposed to the wind and icy mists, because in consequence of the laws of body-soul union the soul is unhappy in such places. How then could we unite ourselves to those whose coldness makes us feel exposed to ice, when they make a law of their passions and pleasures, or to those who sensibly afflict us by the troublesome and disagreeable place they give us in their minds and hearts? We ought not, then, pretend to keep charity among men, attract them to us nor bind them to us in some way nor be useful to them, unless we render to them those duties which will persuade them that they will be satisfied with us.

V. Since it is not up to us to infuse inward grace into peoples' hearts, and since that grace alone teaches men to sacrifice their present happiness for love of Order, we are often obliged to make use of their concupiscence or self-love in order to moderate their passions and increase in them the efficacy of the grace of Jesus Christ. For, finally, if in the Old Testament the angels led the Jews only by using their motives of self-love, in order to conserve the worship of God among them, since the angels were not themselves dispensers of true goods nor of the grace necessary to deserve them, surely we ought for our part to work for the conversion of men by natural means, which are furnished by general laws. We ought to plant and water, and to expect the increase and fruition from heaven. We ought to try to make the universal instrument of iniquity, the concupiscence of pride and pleasures, to serve the good and alter self-love a bit to win it over and govern it. The grace of the Savior coming to their aid will change hearts and make the weak to walk on paths of justice, which paths we shall show them by adroitly and charitably using those means

which are within our power.

VI. Thus it is a certain truth that though our duties consist for the most part only in various sensible marks which signify to other men that they do have a place in our hearts and minds, which signifying satisfies their self-love, we ought nevertheless to render those duties precisely, in order to make use of them not for our private benefit nor to sustain concupiscence in others when it flatters us in some way, but rather in order to annihilate and sacrifice our spirit by the help of the grace of Jesus Christ.

VII. Thus, though people who are our equals do not sensibly represent the divine power and majesty, to which is due the submission of the mind, nevertheless we ought to treat them as our superiors and give them sensible marks of our inner respect, in the thought that their merit, their virtue and invisible relation to God render them worthy of these duties, or that if they are unworthy of them, we can contribute to rendering them worthy of those duties only insofar as we win their friendship and good graces.

VIII. Concerning those who are below us, they need not be treated as our superiors, though we could regard them as such according to these words of St. Paul: *Let each esteem others better than himself* [*Phillip.* 2:3]. But they must often be treated as our equals and friends. For the chief aim of our duties is to conserve charity among men, and to become bound to them in a tender and durable friendship, in order to be able to be useful to them, and that they maybe useful to us. Now, to achieve this, our duties must be sincere, or at least it must be probable [to them] that we place other men in our own estimation in the same way as we indicate externally that we place them. Thus, if a superior lowers himself to treat his inferiors as equals, they will be satisfied, for there is some probability of sincerity in this. But, by contrast, if he subjects himself to them, they will have reason to believe – if they regard him as a sane man of only mediocre virtue – that he is making fun of them and playing with them. They will be apt to believe that this excessive flattery is only a sham, covering for some extraordinary plan, or they may even scorn him as a petty spirit in whom even though they might be placed in high position by his flattery, they are not the least bit respected. They will all regard themselves as leaderless, and will live in their fantasy because of the indiscreet abasement of the one who had the right to command and lead them. For when the leader abases himself too much, he is scorned, and cannot raise himself up again without irritating others. But when he treats as equals only those who are subject to him, we feel once again that we have a teacher; and we are not surprised to see him take command and authority once again.

IX. When, through their virtue, our equals humble themselves before us, and defer superiority to us, they do not thereby fulfill their duties toward us. They must defer excellence to us, and give us true marks, or at least believable ones, of a particular esteem and friendship. For if we do not think that their abasement before us is a mark of their esteem for us, then our self-love cannot be satisfied. By means of virtue, we can subject ourselves to another whom we scorn. Now whoever obeys us while scorning us gives us a shock greater than

would someone who commands us by giving us true marks of his esteem and friendship. Often it is nature which gives us our teachers. We can obey without lowering ourselves, without sacrificing ourselves, without annihilating ourselves; but we cannot love scorn naturally and if we are lacking in virtue. Self-love never accommodates itself to this, no matter what skill it might have in adjusting other things to its own ends. For we cannot, without moral chagrin, see ourselves divested of our excellence and grandeur in the minds of others, which minds are also the locale of our vanities and pomp. Perhaps our equal gives us a great example of virtue, if he really wants to subject himself to us. We might admire his humility; we might even imitate it naturally and through pride, for often the prideful are the most civil and honest. But if he wants to make himself loved by us, he must place us honorably in his mind and delicately in his heart. He must flatter our unjust and proud concupiscence. Then, even if, in appearance, he be less subject to our wills, he will have made himself more able to be bound in friendship with us and he will perfectly fulfill his duties toward us if he uses the opening we give him in our minds in exchange for the place he will give us in his, in order to sacrifice our concupiscence within and make the immutable order of justice to reign over it.

X. It is not as easy as we might imagine, to persuade other men that they have the place they wish to fill in our hearts and minds, nor to discover the real feelings they have toward us. Therefore the least equivocal marks must be examined, as must the most sensible of the inner dispositions of minds, in order to understand the foundations of hearts and to convince others of our respect and amity for them. Certainly, our words are equivocal signs, and they deceive in the mouths of most men. Moreover since they are arbitrarily instituted, words do not vividly persuade us of the truths they express. Only fools or those who have a great opinion of themselves allow themselves to be mistaken about this (perhaps also those who have no experience of the world). But our facial expressions and outward behavior are a natural language, which makes itself understood without thought and persuades by a lively impression and which, so to speak, infuses conviction into minds. Moreover, this language is not deceptive; at least it rarely is, because it is a natural and almost necessary effect of the current disposition of the soul. For, in conclusion, the soul discloses what is most secret to it by the expressions it spreads mechanically over the face; and when we are sensitive to different expressions, we see into the heart of the one who speaks, we see the feelings and the movements by which he is agitated in relation to ourselves.

XI. Thus really to persuade men that they have the rank they wish to have in our esteem and friendship, we must genuinely esteem and love them. Hence that is our obligation. We must excite within ourselves, in their presence, those movements which naturally make themselves felt by others via the expressions they spread over our faces; and if our imagination happens to be cold concerning someone, because their merit seems rather mediocre to us, we must present ourselves with some sort of motive to stimulate ourselves, or at least act in a way such that men will be able to blame the frigidity of our temperament for

that coldness which rebuffs them, [i.e. the coldness of] those only partially honest and partially winning manners we have in their presence. Above all, we must be careful not to force our expressions, not to adopt one which contradicts itself and cannot be sustained because not having any agreement with the present disposition of our mind. Nothing is more obvious nor more offensive. It is better to be quiet than to praise people with that treacherous and flattering expression which deceives and flatters only the stupid and insensitive. Charity and Religion can suffice to halt the natural movements of the machine; for Charity and Religion furnish enough just motives for us to honor and sincerely to love men and to have contempt for ourselves.

XII. But besides our words and manners, there are real services, and these are the surest and most convincing marks of esteem and friendship. It is also through real services that we ought to make friends, and test those we already have. But, since of all duties these are the most difficult, we ought never to believe that one who fails to render them to us, fails in friendship toward us. For it must be noted that there are persons by nature so weak, so languid, so restrained, in a word so difficult to move, that they do nothing or almost nothing for their friends. But, also, they do nothing for themselves. Hence we must be very careful, for if we were to decide that they had no friendship for us, we should also believe that they had no love for themselves. Moreover, I believe I should say that there is usually nothing more solid and durable than the friendship of those persons who seem to lack it, because they lack that vivacity of imagination and lack that temporary fire which ignites and burns out as soon as we honor [such volatile] people for exposing to them a need for their help. Here is the reason for that:

XIII. The fermentation of the blood and an abundance of spirits warm the imagination and give men the motion which animates them and stimulates them. Now, those who have lively passions and ardent imaginations are inconstant beyond description, because it is not Reason which guides them, Reason which remains ever the same, but humors which ignite and then as quickly disappear, humors whose fermentation excites different motions every day. Moreover, it is almost always the body which speaks through them, and since the body speaks only for itself and for goods related to the body, the outcome is that the slightest interest determines a motion toward its particular profit, even though it was a motion which was only produced in the first place for the profit of the friend in whom some advantage was to be found. For it is always agreeable to make and to keep friends. Finally, there is no solid and durable friendship except that based on Religion, fortified by Reason, animated and sustained by the sweet pleasures of a mutual possession of the truth. Religion, Reason, truth are all pure phantoms to an imagination excited and agitated by other objects. For none of them has any relation to the body and the society it forms with other bodies for the good of bodies. None of them has anything about it to flatter the imagination, which speaks only for the good of the body, for that which animates it, gladdens it, gives and conserves its being.

XIV. When a man makes the unfortunate decision to seek a fortune, to

advance and elevate himself in the world, let him seek for friends those who have a strong and lively imagination; let him stimulate them and set them in motion! Their motion will perhaps bring him to the highest dignities; for it is imagination which reigns here below, and distributes riches and honors. All we need is a dominant imagination in order to place a silly fop honorably in our minds, and to cover with confusion the wisest, most learned, virtuous personage in the state. So let whoever wants to, advance himself, place himself well in the minds of those who have these motions of the imagination. Let him win their good graces, excite them, prod them. They will carry him far, they will raise him high! But let him look out for himself. Nothing is more incomprehensible, nor more intractable than the imagination. It is placed in mechanisms skittish and difficult to lead. Its fantastic and fickle behavior must be well-understood; people of this dominant imagination must be tested and adroitly managed. Otherwise, the friends who have elevated this man will also throw him down, and trample him under foot with greater anger and rage than they had given him of marks of favor and friendship.

XV. But those who, content with their situation, want to have good and true friends, let them seek such friends among lovers of truth and justice. Let them establish their friendships on a mutual communion of true goods, immutable goods which render friendships more firm and constant, inexhaustible goods which banish jealousy and envy. And let them be persuaded that the people who seem to be the least precise in duties of friendship are the most faithful and sincere friends, if it is coldness of temperament which is the cause. The imagination of these people is neither fickle nor skittish, but whatever it may be that pleases you, they know how to restrain and govern it. Their passions are neither lively nor quick-tempered. They know how to estimate and love according to reason. With them, friendship is not an inconstant passion, but a solid virtue. And though lacking in spirits and fire, though appearing outwardly cold and immobile, they have for us all the feelings and motions which they ought to have.

XVI. But though we ought often to be satisfied with those who do not give us sensible marks of their friendship, we ought not for our part to be content if we do not make them feel ours in a lively way. For the majority of men, being more sensible than reasonable, will never be satisfied with us if they do not read upon our face and become convinced by our services that their interests are dear to us. We are by duty obliged to do things for them which we would not do for ourselves. They do not feel the difficulty such a movement causes us; but they are pleased with the agitation [it produces in them]. They perhaps do not have the same feeling as we about the goods of the present life, for their passions have blinded them. Thus, judging others by themselves, they will believe that we lack esteem and friendship for them if, in order to render a service to them, we will not give up occupations more holy and more important, if we do not do for them those things we would not do for ourselves; and such a thought will not fail to excite in them unjust and perhaps criminal passions.

XVII. It is for that reason that society is a difficult and troublesome servitude

for all those not born for it and who are able to pass on to other societies. This is perhaps the most harsh of penances. It is a commerce wherein the most honest and most equitable persons often lose much more than they gain; they put out a great deal and get little back. We must not make particular liaisons which oblige us to [perform] duties which the disposition of our machine or other reasons do not permit us to render; for we must not make friends in order to make them our enemies. Nothing is more depressing than an enemy formerly a friend, who abuses favors done for him. Let us then examine our strengths, and not let ourselves be caught in the dangerous pleasure of knowing and being known; and let us bind ourselves to society only insofar as we are in a condition or a will to fulfill the duties [attendant thereto], only insofar as we can be useful to others without harming ourselves, or at least only insofar as we can do less harm to others than render service to them.

NOTE

1. Cf. Pascal's *Pensées*, Brunschvicg 400 and 404 (Lafuma #278 and #276, respectively).

Chapter Thirteen

Continuation of the same subject. In order to be loved, we must become lovable. Rules for conversation. On different expressions. On Christian friendships.

I. Though we need not enter into particular social bonds with every sort of person, especially when we do not feel strong enough and skillful enough to sustain such society, nevertheless we must make ourselves loved generally by everyone, in order that there may be no one to whom we cannot be useful. But to make ourselves loved, we must become lovable. It is an unjust and ridiculous pretension to demand friendship, and those who do not make themselves loved ought to blame only themselves. If we do not always render justice to merit, because of not understanding it and usually judging it poorly, still everyone is sensible to lovable qualities, and those who possess them never lack friends. The merit of others can obscure our own; and when we render them justice, we seem to wrong ourselves. We cannot elevate others without lowering ourselves, and when we put them beneath ourselves, we think we are greater for doing so. But when we love people, we do them no wrong. Rather it seems that the soul is increased when pouring itself out to other hearts, and that it is clothed and adorned by the glory which surrounds our friends. Hence we are always loved, provided we make ourselves lovable; but we do not always make ourselves esteemed, no matter what merit we have.

II. What then are the qualities which make us lovable? Nothing is easier than to discover them. It is not sophistication, learning, a handsome face, a body just right and well-formed, high birth, riches, nor even virtue; it is not defined by any of these. For we may have an aversion for someone who possesses all these estimable qualities. What is it, then? It is to appear such that others are persuaded that they will be content with us. If someone who has great goods is greedy, if someone who is sophisticated is also haughty, if someone of quality is cruel and brutal, or if one who really has virtue and merit supposes that therefore everything is owing to him, all these qualities, estimable as they may be, do not make lovable those who possess them. Men invincibly want to be happy. Only he can make himself to be loved, I do not say esteemed, who is good or seems to be. But no one is good in his relation to us, however perfect he may be in himself, if he does not pour out upon us the gifts which God gave to him.

III. Thus the sophisticate who jeers at everyone, makes himself odious to everyone; and the learned man who makes a show of his learning clothes

himself in pedantry and ridiculously burlesques himself. Those who want to be loved and who are spirited ought to share their spiritedness with others. Let them make the best of those good things others speak of in their presence, and do it so well that everyone will be glad to be with them. Let him who has learning refrain from playing the teacher, and teaching those truths of which he is most convinced. But let him acquire the secret of insensibly bringing to birth the light of reason in the minds of those who hear him, so that each will find himself enlightened without suffering the shame of having had to become a disciple. A person who is generous is not lovable if he elevates himself or boasts of his generosities. In effect he blames his giving on the one to whom he gave, by the confusion with which he covers the deed. But one who shares his sophistication and learning with others, as well as his money and grandeur, without anyone noticing it, and without his drawing any advantage from this, necessarily wins all hearts by such virtuous generosity; virtuous and charitable only, I say; only sincere and generous. For any other generosity is only a pure effect of self-love, any other is acquisitive or at least very badly governed.

IV. But a person who constantly discloses himself to us in ways which humiliate us, in order to elevate or amuse himself at our expense, one who, lacking in respect for us, uses us so freely and treats us so cavalierly; in a word all dishonest men inspire in us a horror and irreconcilable aversion. There is perhaps no man who is equally strong and robust in every part which goes to compose what he is. Thus when we know that a man is weak in some respect, we must never take advantage of him at that weak spot; he cannot be touched there without being hurt. Men must be treated with respect and charity, and we must greatly fear to hurt them where they are vulnerable. But on the other hand we must not, by overly-affected behavior, embarrass them on account of their extreme sensitivities. We ought to act naturally with them, insofar as their quality, their present dispositions, and their humor permits, and not be too apprehensive about attacking them on the side where they fear nothing. We shall in fact make them happy by battling with them on that side, where they are strong; and even joking will gladden them when they feel that it is not meant to offend them. Man naturally loves to exercise his mind, when he has one, as much as his body when it is vigorous. The resistance he puts up, the victories he wins, testify to him of his strength and excellence, and make them visible to others. And that gives him a secret satisfaction. For finally, movement gladdens and animates us; so that a person who contradicts us because he misses the point, disturbs us less than a person who gives us no subject by which we could show those qualities we strongly admire in ourselves and wish others to admire in us.

V. Men are much more sensible and much more sensitive about the qualities esteemed in the world than about those which are estimable in themselves; about the qualities related to their condition or employment than about the perfections essential to their being; about those finally which they do not have, or rather those which they are not often enough believed to have, whether or not they do have them, than about any others. Thus to treat as a coward a man from

the wars who has not yet shown many signs of valor, is cruelly to insult him. For courage is esteemed in the world; moreover it is thought necessary in a man going to war; so that when one lacks it or sees he will have to get by while lacking it, will make every effort to hide this kind of weakness. For we hide with great care that which, if discovered, covers us with confusion and shame. It is the same with all other conditions. If we let an ignorant professor or physician know that we have that opinion of him, we shall never be friends with him, especially if we are so indiscreet as to tell others what we think of him, and it gets back to him. If we give a woman reason to believe that we find her plain, we cannot fail to irritate her; for women pride themselves on beauty as men do on their minds. I am not saying that women do not pride themselves on their minds, nor even their learning; for some have become extremely learned or spiritually accomplished, and some even moreso than some professors. We must understand the world in order to please it; we must at least converse with enough restraint, honesty and respect for people, that they will attribute to inadvertence or naiveté, any evil we may do to them; otherwise it is not possible to be loved. For we are not effectively lovable when we injure or discomfort others.

VI. Since our expression and manners speak a language much more lively and more sensible than discourse, and present to others our inner dispositions as they really are, therefore as I have already said, we must take particular care to have a modest and respectful expression, in proportion to the quality and known merit of the persons to whom we speak. I mean an expression which sensibly shows that we willingly accord them the place they believe they deserve in our minds and hearts. A plain and careless expression will only be agreeable to inferiors, and it is barely tolerable before our equals. For though this expression is pleasing in that it shows we are not excessively preoccupied with ourselves, still it displeases in that it makes others feel we rarely go to any effort for others. A grave air is very discomforting. For while it does make it plain that we esteem ourselves highly, it makes others think that we esteem them less. Such an expression is permissible only on the faces of superiors, and it only looks well on them when it temporarily presents the power with which they are clothed. It looks well on a sovereign, a judge who renders justice, and a priest at the alter, or on any man who, by his character or otherwise, puts others in the presence of God. But it makes ridiculous and contemptible a person who urges it improperly, and it inspires indignation and an inner aversion for the fool and self-glorifier who covers himself with it. But as to a haughty and brutal expression, it irritates minds more than can be described, for it shows in a very lively and sensible way that we have neither esteem nor friendship for others. A sovereign who adopts it appears to be a dreadful monster and at the same time ridiculous, on account of which others can only naturally have the worst scorn and irreconcilable hate for him.

VII. All the various expressions are composed of these four [modest and respectful; plain and careless; grave; haughty and brutal.]. They are all natural effects and none is free from the esteem we have for ourselves in relation to

others. According as our imagination is struck by the appearance of the quality and merit of those around us, we adopt without thinking and in consequence of the laws established for the good of society, that expression which is most appropriate to conserve for us, in the minds of others, the place we believe we deserve, I mean the place we imagine ourselves to deserve at that moment. For it is not Reason, but imagination which acts in these encounters. it is not an abstract knowledge of our qualities in relation to those of other people; it is a sensible view of their grandeur and their baseness and the inner feeling we have about ourselves, which relaxes the springs of our machine to give to the surface of the body that posture, and to spread over the face those different expressions which disclose to men the momentary dispositions of our mind toward them. Thus it is evident that in order naturally and without what would appear as affectation to adopt that modest and respectful expression which makes us lovable to those who have too much pride, it is not sufficient to believe that those others have more quality and merit than we – our imagination must actually emulate them, and set the animal spirits in motion, those immediate causes of all the changes which occur in and on our bodies.

VIII. Yet the imagination is so bizarre, and thus also the minds of those who let themselves be led by the disposition and momentary movement of their machine, that it often happens that the same expression brings about, in two different people or in the same one at different times, entirely opposing effects. This depends on the way in which the imagination is supplied, and the quality of the animal spirits. A pitiable expression excites compassion in some and hatred in others, or perhaps contempt or mockery. Thus we must open our eyes and look at peoples' faces, to read there the effect which our expression produces in them, and form or reform our expression accordingly. This is most certain. But it is also what we naturally do, without reflection, especially when we need the help of others, and when we passionately desire to win their good graces. There is no need for me to explain any further what must be done to accustom ourselves to adopt those expressions which make us lovable. The world is so flattered and corrupted that I would be very afraid that some wicked use might be made of this. People are already only too learned in this matter, and the world does not come out any better for it. For until men should know well how to consult Reason and scorn mannerisms [as a source for knowledge], they will be led and deceived by the imagination of adroit and lively minds; because it is the imagination which spreads over the face and the body the various expressions which flatter even the most wise, and which never fail to deceive the simple.

IX. When a man is rich and powerful, he is not more lovable, if for all that he does not become better in others' eyes by his generosity and the protection he gives them. For nothing is good, nothing is loved so much as one who does good, who makes others happy. Still, I am not sure that we truly love the generous rich and the powerful protectors. For in the end it is ordinarily not to the rich that we pay court, but to their riches. It is not the great who are esteemed, but their grandeur; or rather our own glory that we are seeking – that

is, our rest, our repose, our pleasure. Drunks love not wine, but the pleasure of getting drunk. This is obvious; for if it happens that the wine seems to them bitter or distasteful, they no longer want it. As soon as a debaucher has satisfied his passion, he has nothing but horror for the object which excited him; or if he continues to love it, it is because his passion is still alive. All of which means that perishable goods cannot serve as a bond closely to unite hearts. We cannot form durable friendships on a basis of transient goods, by means of passions which depend on anything as inconstant as the circulation of the humors and the blood; it is possible only by means of the mutual possession of a common good, Reason. It is only this universal and inexhaustible good whose enjoyment can make constant and peaceful friendships. Only this good can be possessed without envy, and be communicated to others without doing any wrong. We must excite each other to the acquisition of this good, and join together mutually to procure it. We must generously give to others whatever we already possess of it; and not fear to ask them for what they have conquered by their attention and their labor in the land of truth. Thus we need to enrich ourselves by the treasures of wisdom and Reason. For we possess the truth all the more when we communicate it to others. In this way we shall make true friends, constant friends, generous, sincere and immortal friends. For Reason does not die. It gives, to all those who possess it, immortality in life, and immutability in conduct.

X. But who will lead us to Reason? Who will subject us to its laws, make of us its true disciples? It will be Reason itself; but incarnate, humbled, made visible and sensible, proportioned to our weakness. It will be Jesus Christ, the wisdom of the Father, the natural and universal light of intelligences, who, no longer able to be the light of our minds since they were plunged by sin into our present flesh and blood, made himself sin, and by the foolishness of the cross vividly strikes our senses and attracts our glances and reflections to it. Yes, Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone, can lead us to Reason and reunite us in his divine person by the ministry of his clarified humanity. Our nature subsists in Reason through him, and Reason will reign, through him, in our minds and hearts. For, in the end, it is for Reason that we are made; it is for its sake that we are intelligences. It is by it that we have been formed; and, again, it is by it that we ought to be re-formed. Jesus Christ nailed to the cross is our holy Sacrifice, and the perfect model of the sacrifice we ought to make of our own self-love to the love of Order. But, as risen, consummated in God, established High Priest according to the eternal order, of whom Melchizedek was the harbinger, He is the fruitful source of those celestial influences which alone can teach us to sacrifice our corrupt nature as he did, and thereby earn a wholly-divine being, a glorious and incorruptible transformation; to earn, thereby, being reunited to the intelligible substance of Reason through divine charity, in an eternal peace and society.

XI. We are true Christians if, here below, we will be faithful friends; and we shall never find such faithful friends as among those who have a solid piety. For there is constant and true friendship only in the immutability of Reason. And

we can, at least now, only constantly follow Reason by means of the strength which incarnate Reason gives to us. We can sacrifice our interests to the laws of friendship only by means of a charity unknown to nature, a charity which draws its origin and efficacy only from the true sanctuary where Jesus Christ yields up the sovereign sacrifice. A libertine friend may have been always faithful to you, I will admit. But it is because he has always found his reward, or hopes that his self-love will be rewarded some day by you. But would this friend serve you if it were at his own expense, or without hope of return, when even just men are ordinarily motivated to serve God or other men only because of the hope of a reward, which reward flatters their enlightened self-love all the more because it infinitely surpasses the magnitude of their services?

XII. There are no disinterested friends; only those can pass for disinterested who do not expect their reward from us. Therefore only those can truly be our friends who wish for nothing from this world, a world which is to be overturned. Only those are our good friends, our sincere, faithful and salutary friends, who render service to us because Reason and charity ordain it, and who await only from God those goods capable of flattering their self-love, that is, a self-love enlightened, generous, and legitimate. Let us then make our choice for such friends; and as for those friendships already made, let us try to secure them through the immutability of Reason, and to sanctify them in the holiness of religion. Let us regard the salvation of our brothers as the reward for the services we render to them. That reward will soon be followed by another; and our glory for having worked under Jesus Christ for the construction of His work, will endure eternally. The commerce of the world ought to incline only toward establishing an eternal society in Jesus Christ. We ought to converse with men only to work for their sanctification, and so that they may work for ours. Certainly, God has put us in the world only for this purpose. Happy we will be, a thousand times happier than we could imagine, if, entering into this just purpose of our common Teacher, we make ourselves worthy, through Jesus Christ our precursor, to enter into his repose, and to enjoy his glory and pleasures forever.

Chapter Fourteen

On duties each of us owes to himself. These consist, in general, of working for our own perfection and happiness.

I. The duties everyone owes to himself, as well as those we owe to our neighbor, may be reduced in general to working for our happiness and perfection: for our perfection, which consists principally in a perfect conformity of our will with Order; for our happiness, which consists only in the enjoyment of pleasures, I mean pleasures solid and capable of satisfying a mind made to possess the sovereign good.

II. It is in the conformity of the will with Order that the perfection of the mind principally consists. For whoever loves order more than all other things has virtue. Whoever obeys order in all things has virtue; whoever obeys order in all things fulfills his duties. And such a person earns a solid happiness, the legitimate reward of a proven virtue. He sacrifices temporary pleasures to order, suffers pains and scorns himself through respect for the divine law. That same law, omnipotent and all-just, will decide his fate and reward him eternally.

III. To seek after happiness is no virtue – it is a necessity. For it is not up to us to want to be happy; but virtue is [up to us, because we are] free. Self-love, to speak precisely, is not a quality we could either augment or diminish. We cannot cease from loving ourselves. But we can cease from loving ourselves badly. We cannot halt the motions of self-love, but we can govern ourselves by the divine law. By means of the motion of an enlightened self-love, a self-love sustained by faith and hope, and animated by charity, we can sacrifice temporary pleasures for future ones, and make ourselves unhappy for a time, in order to avoid the eternal vengeance of the just judge. For grace does not destroy nature. The motion which God constantly impresses on us toward the good in general, will never halt. Sinners and the just, alike, equally want to be happy. They equally run toward the source of their felicity. But the just do not let themselves be deceived or corrupted by the appearances which flatter them. The foretaste of true goods sustains them on their course. The sinner, on the other hand, blinded by his passions, forgets God, His vengeance and rewards, and uses all the motion God gives him toward the true good, to run after phantoms.

IV. Hence self-love, the desire to be happy, is neither a virtue nor a vice. But it is, rather, the natural motive to virtue and, in sinners, becomes the motive to vice. God alone is our end; God alone is our good. Reason alone is our law; and

self-love or the invincible desire to be happy is the motive which ought to make us love God, unite ourselves to Him, and submit ourselves to His law. For we are not a law unto ourselves, nor a good unto ourselves. God alone possesses power; hence He alone is lovable, He alone is formidable. Invincibly we want to be happy; thus we ought to obey His law inviolably. For, finally, we cannot bring ourselves to realize too much, that the Almighty is just, that all disobedience will be punished and all obedience rewarded. At present, in one sense we are happy in disorder; the exercise of virtue is difficult, and trying. This ought to be so, to test our faith and make us acquire legitimate pleasures. But this cannot and ought not to continue to be thus. If the soul is not immortal and the universe does not one day change its aspect, there is no God – for an unjust god is a chimera. The mind clearly sees all this. And what ought enlightened self-love, our invincible and insatiable desire for happiness, to conclude from all this? That we must submit ourselves completely to the divine law, in order solidly to be happy. This conclusion is drawn from the most thorough evidence.

V. Thus our self-love is the motive which, aided by grace, unites us to God as our good or cause of our happiness, and subjects us to Reason as our law or model of our perfection. But we must not turn our motive into our law or aim. We must truly and sincerely love order and unite ourselves to God by Reason. We must prefer the divine law to all things, because we can not scorn it and cease conforming to it without losing the free access we have, by means of it, to God. We must not desire that order conform itself to our wishes. This is not possible. For order is immutable and necessary. Nor should we desire that God not punish disorders, for God is an incorruptible judge. Such desires corrupt us; such impertinent desires are injurious to holiness, to justice, to divine immutability; they strike at the essential attributes of divinity. These disorders must be hated, and all the motions of the heart be formed according to order. We must even avenge the honor of offended order at our own expense, or at least humbly submit ourselves to divine vengeance. For a man who really wants God not to punish injustice or drunkenness, does not love God. And even though by force of his enlightened self-love, he abstains from stealing and inebriation, he is not just. He makes an end out of what ought to be only the motive of his desires. Let him invoke the savior of sinners, who alone can change his heart. But a man who would love better if there were no God, than if there were a god who was pleased to make eternally unhappy those who inviolably love Order and Reason, such a man is a just man: because this fantastic god, unjust and cruel, is not lovable. Even grace does not annihilate self-love, as I have already shown. Rather, it is satisfied to govern it and subject it to the divine law. It makes us to love the true God and scorn disorder and the injustice which the disordered imagination can attribute to divinity.

VI. From all of this it is manifest, first, that we must enlighten our self-love, so that it will excite us to virtue; and second, that we must never follow the motive of self-love [by itself, unenlightened]. In the third place, it is manifest that by following inviolable order, we work solidly to satisfy our self-love; in a word, since God alone is the cause of our pleasures, we ought to subject

ourselves to His law and work for our perfection, leaving it to his justice and goodness to proportion our happiness to our merits and to those of Jesus Christ in whom ours are worthy of an infinite reward.

VII. I have explicated in Part One of this treatise the principal things necessary in order to work for our perfection, [i.e.] to acquire and conserve the habitual and dominant love of immutable order, in which consist our duties concerning ourselves. Here they are, in general:

VIII. We must accustom ourselves to the effort of attention, and thereby acquire some strength of mind. We need consent only to evidence, and thereby conserve the freedom of the mind. We must constantly study men in general and ourselves in particular, in order to know ourselves perfectly. We must meditate day and night upon the divine law, in order to follow it precisely. Let us compare ourselves to order, so as to humble ourselves and scorn ourselves. Let us be reminded of divine justice, so as to fear it and be aroused. Let us think on our Mediator, so as to invoke His aid and be consoled. Let us regard Jesus Christ as our model; let us declare Jesus Christ our savior; let us follow Jesus Christ as our strength, our wisdom, the principle of our eternal happiness. The world deceives us by way of our senses; it disturbs our minds by way of our imagination; it traps us and drops us into the worst unhappiness by way of our passions. We must break off the dangerous commerce we have with it by way of our bodies, if we want to augment the union we have with God by way of Reason. For these two unions, of the mind to God and the mind to the body, are incompatible. We cannot be perfectly united to God without abandoning the interests of the body, without scorning it, sacrificing it, and losing it.

IX. This is not to say that it would be permissible for us to take our own life, nor even to ruin our health. For our body is not ours – it is God's, it is the state's, our family's, our friends'. We ought to conserve it in its strength and vigor, according to the use we are obliged to make of it. But we ought not to conserve it against the order of God and at the expense of other men. We must expose it to danger for the good of the state, and not fear to weaken it, ruin it, or destroy it in order to carry out the orders of God. It is the same with our honor and our goods. All is for God and for charity, and ought to be conserved, employed, and sacrificed in honor of and through reliance on the divine law, immutable and necessary order. I am not going into all this in detail, for I intended only to expose those general principles by which everyone is obliged to govern his conduct, in order to arrive happily in the true place of his repose and pleasures.

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